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THE WIDOW OF TOLEDO.

A TALE OF

"LOW BIRTH AND IRON FORTUNE."

BY DR. S. P. BRONSON.

CHAPTER IV.—CONTINUED.

The individual passing from the cabinet was the Marquis de Sorbano, who about two hours after his return home had been summoned to repair to the palace and give the particulars of the cause of his duel with Don Juan.

"Whom shall I have the honor to announce, senor?" demanded the usher of the inner door.

"A stranger, who has come to inform his excellency of the name of his preserver," answered the man-in-gray, with becoming importance.

"His excellency is very busy," said the usher. "I will bear it to him."

"You are at liberty to do so, senor!" said the man in gray, turning on his heel.

"Stay—come back!" said the usher, coloring, as he perceived that he was understood. "His excellency is now at leisure. Your name is——"

"A stranger, come to inform his excellency of the address of his preserver!" repeated the man in gray, blandly.

The usher surveyed him an instant or two with an air of baffled resentment, and then invited him to follow him.

Half an hour later, the man in gray retired from the presence of the viceroy richer than when he had entered the palace by a hundred crowns.

"A pretty penny," he observed. "So much for keeping one's eyes and ears open, and patronizing Honest Philip! I'll give him two candles a day for a week! Decidedly, Pequilo, boy—thou art in rare luck, and can'st afford, from this day's business, to have the jolliest drunk of any vagabond in Spain! But thou hast not made thy best penny yet, boy! The notes of the defunct Don Juan, who deserved his death—for his manuscripts prove him to have been an infamous spy—the notes of the defunct Don Juan, I say, concerning the whereabouts of Don Garcia de Vega, if properly used, may also help thee to something handsome; yea, perhaps enable thee, with Honest Philip's assistance, to set up an inn of thine own, where thou mayest guzzle thine own wine all day long, and in thine own bed sleep thyself sober!"

CHAPTER V.

THE WIDOW OF TOLEDO.

It is not for us to enter a lady's boudoir when she is dressing. She might not like it. In fact from what little we know of her sex, we are quite confident she would not. On the contrary, she would probably be highly indignant, and imperiously order us from the room. For the boudoir, in woman's eyes, is holy ground, and not to be profaned by the rude boots of vulgar masculines, who are tabooed from its precincts with a solemnity to which only the pen of a police reporter can do even moderate justice! Nor have we any right, that we are aware of, to take the liberty of introducing others there. For what lady would like to have her privacy invaded by a great army of curious moderns? If dressed for display, she, perhaps, might not object; since it is a weakness of some of the female gender to love to have their new dress looked at by both sexes, to fill their own with envy and to extort admiration from the other. But when a lady is in the act of dressing, the case is different. *Then* she desires to be invisible to all but herself and her maid. Then she is not at home to any body; not even to him who, if she have never yet been wedded, has made the conquest of her virgin heart, and with whom she expects to walk hand in hand "adown the road of time."

For these reasons, we shall not take the reader into the boudoir of Donna Isabel de la Montera, the rich widow of the viceroy's late counsellor, who, though she had no occasion to employ any of the mysterious compounds which enabled her less favored sisters to pass for dashing beauties, was yet very choice of her private room, and who had an indescribable air, and eye, and manner, that would *look* an intruder down till, trembling with shame and confusion, he sank through the floor—a fate that we wish neither to the reader nor ourself. But inasmuch as it is important that we should hear a conversation that is being carried on there, between the wealthy widow and Ximene, her favorite waiting woman, let us throw on an invisible mantle and fancy ourselves standing behind an invisible curtain where we can catch every word without seeing or being seen. In this way we can gratify ourselves, without trespassing on the lady's dignity or our own.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning, and the widow's tresses were going through the hands of Ximene, a brunette of about eighteen, who was about four years younger than her mistress, and if not as imposing in beauty as the latter, was yet pretty enough, without the aid of art, to cause a stranger to pause and admire her jet-colored ringlets, her fine thoughtful forehead, her delicately pencilled brows, her melancholy, love-melting eyes, her peachy cheek, her small ruby lip, and her medium form in which grace contested the palm with symmetry. Her spotless reputation, her modesty, truthfulness, neatness, and, though lowly born, intuitive refinement and good taste, had recommended her to her mistress, who had become much attached to her, and treated her more like a confidential pet than a servant. She was pleased with her good judgment also, which, coming more from a delicate intuition than a carefully noted experience, was generally found to be astonishingly correct, particularly in reference to men—a subject which exercised the mind of the young widow not a little. This was not owing so much to a special fondness for gentlemen's society, for the lady was heart-free, and had but a poor opinion of men generally, as to her position, which appeared to force them before her; beauty and wealth being, when united, attractions too powerful for poor, weak man, who instinctively bends in homage to both. As the baker so expressively informed the man in gray, she was literally run down with suitors, and as every body seemed to regard it as a settled fact that it was her duty to marry again, and thereby to make some one individual happy, she very naturally fell into the habit of wondering who that individual should be.

THE WIDOW OF TOLEDO AND HER MAID, XIMENE, IN THE BOUDOIR.

"What new thought have you, this morning, Xi'?" she asked, pleasantly.

"No new thought, my lady," answered the waiting woman.

"What old one, then?"

"No old one, either."

"In that case," said her mistress, "you perhaps can tell me whether the name of the mysterious stranger has yet been discovered?"

"Not yet, my lady; at least so Peter the milk driver, who appears to know every thing that is passing in Toledo, informed Lucetta, an hour ago, as he handed her the milk."

"He is a brave fellow, whoever he be," remarked the widow. "I could almost give him a kiss, if I knew him. I have been thinking whether he could be in my train? But I cannot call to mind one sufficiently bold of heart to perform so daring, a feat, unless it be Sorbano. Can it be he, think you?"

"I fancy not," replied Ximene. "The marquis is so well known that if it had been he, his name would not be involved in the present mystery."

"True. That thought did not occur to me. But what opinion have you of Sorbano? Is he not a proper man?"

"He is resolute in what he once concludes to do, and has in him the elements of a successful manhood; is brave, handsome, and, when allowed to have his own way, very pleasant and even-tempered; but, once crossed, is impatient till he is avenged. Do you affect him, my lady?"

"My heart beats as calmly in his presence as in his absence. Is that a sign?"

"Not of love, my lady."

"What of Don Juan?" asked the widow.

"A proud, haughty man; courteous, but selfish; is jealous, irritable, disdainful and malicious; imperious, too, and self-willed; if entrusted with authority would shine as a tyrant. Were a lady mad enough to wed him, her love would expire with herself ere the end of the honeymoon."

"A pleasant fellow, truly!"

"Has he impressed you favorably, my lady?"

"I daily see others that please me more, but none that please me less!"

"I have felt from the first," said the waiting-woman, "that you were in no danger from his visits, or I should have warned you."

"How about your own love affairs, Xi'?"

"Mine, my lady?" said the waiting woman, her former confidence giving place to blushing timidity.

"Yours, girl! You never have visitors, that I am aware of; but then it does not follow that you have no suitors."

"I have neither visitors nor wooers, my lady," answered the waiting woman, in confusion.

"What! with your beauty and at your age?" laughed the widow. "Fie, girl!"

"I could have both, if I were willing," said the waiting woman; "but they would be like those who swarm about you, my lady: persons in whom I could feel no interest."

"Could!" repeated her mistress. "That implies that your affections are already engaged?"

"No, my lady," stammered the waiting woman, in confusion, "not *engaged!*"

"Set upon some one, then?" said the widow.

Ximene was too disturbed to answer.

Her mistress comprehended in an instant that her favorite was the victim of an unreturned attachment.

"Xi'!" she exclaimed, with mingled kindness and reproach, "why have you kept this from *me*?"

"Do not ask me, my lady!" answered the waiting woman, the fringes of her eyes glittering with tears, and her voice broken with convulsive sighs.

"Am I unworthy of your confidence?" demanded the widow. "I have given you mine!"

"You have ever been very kind to me, my lady, and I appreciate and am grateful for it; and if I could do anything or make any sacrifice to show how sensible I am of your goodness——"

"Nonsense, Xi'!" smilingly interrupted the widow. "I knew your heart, or I had never elevated you to your present position. But tell me of him you love. Who is he—what does he do for a living? Is he a toiler for bread or a gentleman?"

"A toiler, my lady, and a gentleman, too," answerered the waiting woman, with a deep blush.

"What, both?" inquired her mistress. "Some unfortunate nobleman whom fickle fortune, having no respect for his merits, has driven to earn his bread?"

"No, my lady. Like me, he is of humble birth, or I had not dared to let my heart go out to him in hope."

"Is he handsome?" asked the widow.

"I think him so. Indeed, I ne'er have looked upon his like. To me he seems as if nature, when moulding him, had fallen in love with her own work and finished and sent him forth that he might shine as a star among men."

"Poor Xi'!" observed the widow. "You are infatuated, and see with biased eyes. Love magnifies the merits of the object of its passion above all reason. Such a fellow as you describe could not live unknown to fame, and yet I have never heard of him. But even if he be as handsome as you represent, girl, what is mere beauty, that you should give your heart to it. It is worth, Xi'—worth that makes the man, after all. A suitor who has no other qualities to recommend him than a pretty face and a good figure, has but little to plume himself upon, in my eyes!"

"In the man I speak of, his beauty and manly carriage are the least of his merits, my lady."

"Indeed, girl? You interest me! I shall rejoice to find him worthy of you. Can he bear himself bravely and with dignity among men? Can he sustain himself in the great affairs of life, as well as dance and sing? Can he be a man both abroad and at home; a lamb in peace, a lion in war? Can he endure petty every day trials without losing his temper? Can he rise pleasantly from the side of a lady, and resent an injury or punish a refractory servant, and then return tranquil and smiling to the lady, and without allowing any vestige of the interruption to linger in his face or manner? And is his mind so ripened by culture that a refined and intelligent lady could trust to him with confidence to preserve her from ennui? A man must be all this to come up to *my* standard; and if your handsome cavalier fall below it, he is simply an every-day fellow, and unfit to have the keeping of so important a thing as your happiness, and you had better dismiss him."

"He is not an every-day fellow," said the waiting woman, proudly. "He is as far above the crowd of silken popinjays that daily dance attendance on Toledo's fair senoras, as is the eagle above lesser birds. And if he were mine, I should regard myself as the happy wife of the bravest and handsomest man in all Spain!"

"You rate him high, Xi'!" observed her mistress. "But you say if he were yours? Knows he not of your love?"

"No, my lady."

"How is this, child!" exclaimed the widow, in surprise. "Is it prudent to place your affections on a gentleman, unsolicited?"

"Can we control our hearts, my lady?"

"I am sure we *ought*, girl!"

"Oh! madam," returned the waiting woman, shaking her head with a sad smile, "you know but little of love. It is not a thing that comes and goes, or rises and decreases in stature, at our bidding. Like the mind, we know that we are under its influence, but how or when it was born, or how from a pleasing thought it grew till it became our ruling spirit, who can tell? We only know that we are under its spell, and that we live thenceforth only for him whose dear image it has set up in our heart. He is our all—our only love and hope—our second self. His thoughts, feelings, tastes are ours, as if they had been born with us, and were part and parcel of our nature. When he speaks, he but expresses what we could have said, if he had not; when he is sad, we are unhappy also; when gay, the lark that sings to heaven, when first the morning sun begins to gild the sky, is not so blithe as we. Come honors to him?—the bays that deck *his* brow, glitter, in sympathy, like a coronet, upon ours. Come storms upon him?—we stand with him under the clouds, endure with him all the fierceness of their cold and rain and sleet, and smilingly encourage him to bear up till sunshine comes again. Falls sickness upon him?—we nurse him back to health. Persecution—death?—we share them with him, and know no joy so great as that of leaving with him a world that would be dark without him."

"Mad, girl—stark, staring mad!" cried the widow, clapping her hands and making the chamber ring with her laughter. "Come, come, Xi'! don't cry. I would not wound you, you know, for any cause. But my affection for you prompts me to say that the sooner you banish your passion for this remarkable Adonis, the better it will be for your peace. Handsome men are invariably vain, and not more vain than worthless. Wives with handsome husbands, so far as my observation extends, lead very miserable lives. Be advised, then, Xi'; dismiss this man with a woman's face, and set your cap for some common mortal, who is well to do, and whose features are homely enough to frighten his looking-glass into pieces, and your chances of happiness will be good. But a *handsome* husband! may the saints preserve us!"

Poor Ximene! This railing at her virgin love was too much for her. She gave up dressing her mistress's hair, which, indeed, she had just finished, and seating herself on a fauteuil, bent her head upon her lap and wept.

The widow was touched. Rising, she approached her favorite, and encircling her neck with her arm, said:

"Nay, Xi'! you know I would not wound you. If your heart is set irrevocably upon this man, you shall have him, if power of mine can compass it. Come, look up, with one of your brightest smiles, and tell me his name? Who knows, if we but set about it, what we two can do? Come, Xi'—who is he?"

"Leon!" faltered the waiting woman, timidly.

"Hey-day, girl!" cried the widow, with affected displeasure. "My secretary?"

"Do not betray me, my lady," cried Ximene, hastily starting up with a scarlet blush.

"Tut, tut, Xi'! Are you not as my own sister? Smile, girl—for, as I live, Leon shall be yours, or no one's! A pity if two heads cannot bring about so simple a match, when ordinary girls compass them with one! Leon shall be yours. Now, be happy!"

"Mine?" repeated the waiting woman, shaking her head, as if she thought so great a joy could not be for her.

"Yours, girl. Have I not said it? His doom is writ. He shall fall before the united schemes of an artful widow and a love-lorn maid! How now?"

"O, my lady!" cried an attendant, rushing horror-stricken into the room, "Leon—poor, innocent Leon—is arrested!"

The widow glanced at Ximene, who was like one transfixed and pale as marble.

"Arrested?" repeated her mistress, with the calm dignity which she only put off to her favorite. "For what?"

"I know not, my lady," answered the attendant. "The officer is below, waiting for Leon to accompany him."

"Waiting!" muttered the widow to herself. "Then the danger is not imminent; for on serious matters the messengers of justice do not 'wait' for prisoners." Then addressing the attendant, she said, aloud: "Retire. I will see this officer."

The attendant withdrew, with an uneasy brow, whose expression did not escape her mistress.

"So, so!" she murmured. "Ximene is not alone in her attachment for my secretary! The fellow is bewitching all the household. I must see to this!" Turning to the waiting-woman she inquired, "Xi', will you go down with me?"

"I have not the courage, my lady," stammered the latter, shrinking back.

"Enough, girl. I understand you. Remain here till I return!"

On reaching the hall the widow observed the officer standing in the door.

"What is this I hear, senor?" she demanded with dignity. "My secretary arrested?"

"Who says that, madam?" returned the officer. "Do I look like an alguazil?"

"He is not arrested, then?"

"No, madam. He is simply requested to appear without delay before his excellency the viceroy!"

"For what purpose, senor?"

"That is not for me to say, madam."

"But you know?"

"I may," answered the officer; "but when on duty, my instructions are to say only what I am commanded."

"If you were not on duty, senor, you would doubtless have some consideration for a lady!"

The officer looked down thoughtfully, as if debating how far he could gratify the fair widow's curiosity without violating the discipline of his office. At length he appeared to see his way. Stepping aside, he pointed to a vehicle in the street, which was barely visible through the trees that lined the garden facing the house.

"Do you see that carriage, madam?"

"I do, senor."

"It is his excellency the viceroy's."

"Well, senor?"

"His state carriage," added the officer. "In the front seat are three persons—the Duke de la Iberra, the Marquis de Santa Cruz, and the Count de Esteban; the rear seat—the post of honor—as you will perceive, madam, being vacant."

"And who is to occupy the seat of honor, senor?"

"The brave gentleman who, yesterday, at the hazard of his own life, preserved that of his excellency the viceroy!"

The widow understood him; but could not speak for surprise.

"I am ready, senor!" said a voice, which she recognized.

And the secretary, for it was he, moved past her to the street.

The widow devoured his receding form, with her eyes, till, through the trees, she beheld him enter the carriage and take the rear seat. The officer stationed himself beside him, and giving a sign to the driver, the vehicle whisked away.

The widow watched it till it disappeared, and then moved, pale and thoughtful, from the door. As she turned she beheld the waiting woman, who, having quitted the boudoir, had been a silent witness of the scene, standing on the staircase, and observing her with an air of mingled anguish and reproach.

The widow, on catching her glance, haughtily drew herself up, and then retired into the reception-room, coldly closing the door behind her.

The waiting woman, pale as death and quivering in every limb, reeled like a drunken thing up to her own apartment, and dropping on her bed, murmured in the agonizing accents of one stunned by some great calamity—

"*She*—MY RIVAL!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE WOODMAN.

About a week after the incidents recorded in the preceding chapter, a woodman of noble stature, and with a countenance whose intelligent expression was far above his station, might have been seen leaning thoughtfully against the trunk of a widely-branching oak that stood in the bosom of a deep wood, which the axe, in the hand of skilful toilers, was shaping into broad pleasant avenues and shady walks. Dimly, and at scattered distances, might also be obtained glimpses of hardy hewers, the echoes of whose regular strokes fell pleasantly upon the ear, and broke the dense silence that otherwise would have been oppressive.

The woodman, judging by the iron gray that intermixed with the black in his short beard and close-cut hair, was in his fifty-fifth or fifty-seventh year. His features were of a bold Roman mould, and his large dark eyes, in whose amber depths lurked a mine of unuttered thought, hung slightly aslant, giving to his general air a sharpness that rendered it somewhat cold and forbidding. He wore a flat round cap, with a heron's feather; a tunic, of coarse blue stuff, which was girded to his shape by a leathern belt, from which hung a trimming-axe, whose short handle curved towards the end; close-fitting pantaloons, creased here and there; and russet boots, whose broad, roomy tops rose above his knees. His aspect, in the main, was that of one whom experience had wounded and embittered, and who was unwilling to share his thoughts with those among whom his lot was cast, and to whose sphere he doubtless had voluntarily descended.

But little was known of him, save that he, some twenty-two or three years before, had come to the estate, which belonged to the father of the viceroy's late counsellor, and asked for work as a common laborer. That a week or two after his engagement, he was followed by his wife and child, whose conversation and manner announced them, notwithstanding their disguise, to be persons of condition. That his wife died a year or two after her arrival, and that no one was permitted to be present in her dying hour save the confessor, who, it was observed, ever after treated the widower and his boy with unusual deference. That the estate was at that period very badly managed, and scarcely allowed a living to its owner, who at length discharged his manager and overseer, and promoted Juan Varella, the widower, to his place; when instantly a change came over the face of affairs. The workmen, who had formerly been in the habit of doing pretty much as they pleased, now learned that they must obey orders to the letter. If any failed to do this, no reason was asked and no excuse received; but on the following Saturday night the delinquents received their wages and also their discharge. The men at first were disposed to murmur at this, and now and then one was inclined to be insolent, and to dare the new manager to step outside of the little box in which he made his payments. Juan Varella was not one to wait twice for such an invitation, and three or four instances of his ability and determination to maintain the dignity of his office were enough. Thenceforth the estate grew thrifty, the family wealthy, and the new manager into a personage of importance. It was noticeable, however, that he never attempted to presume upon his position. He took no liberties with the family, nor allowed the family to take any with him. Whenever any of its members tried to draw him into conversation for the purpose of gaining a clue to his past history, he, if in the house, abruptly quitted the room, and if in the field, hastily turned upon his heel. At the death of the owner, the estate fell into the hands of the viceroy's counsellor, who was glad to retain so desirable a manager, and also to make his son, Leon, his private secretary.

This is all that was known or could be reported of the head woodman, who, as we have said, was leaning against a stalwart oak, and ever and anon impatiently glancing eastward, as if looking for some one from that direction.

Glancing up at length at the protruding limb of an adjoining cypress, he muttered, impatiently,

"The sun has passed the knot, and yet he comes not. What can have delayed him?"

A soft tread behind fell on his ear, and quickly turning, he beheld his son.

A shade of disappointment flitted across his brow. But it was only for an instant, and then his outstretched hand was grasped by Leon.

Fancy the woodman's hair wavy, redundant and of an ebon black; the lines of thought and care around his mouth and temples, erased; the tanned hue of age displaced by the rich glow and sunny freshness of youth; the sharpness of his general features softened to rosy roundness; his gaunt, imposing frame covered with smoother flesh; his dark eye free from its air of suspicion; his firm lips void of their harsh, pitiless sneer; and his wiry voice succeeded by one of a rotund smoothness, strength and ringing clearness, and Leon is before you, who, in appearance, was his father over again, if we could imagine the woodman pushed back to the bright days of his young manhood once more.

"How fares it with you, sir?" said Leon, with mingled affection and respect.

"Well, boy, well!" was the reply. "And with you?"

"As happily as I could wish it with my father! But you did not expect me, sir?"

"No," answered the woodman, with a bluntness that had not been always his, but which now was with him a habit. "What news from the city?"

"His excellency the viceroy, since my last visit, has had a narrow escape from drowning in the Tagus," said the secretary, who understood his parent.

"But he was rescued?"

"Happily, and in time," answered Leon.

"What else?" asked his father.

"Don Juan de Mendoza, a young cavalier, of a proud, wealthy family, was slain, on the morning of Tuesday, by the Marquis de Sorbano, in a duel."

The woodman turned pale. Leon, however, with his usual discretion, affected not to notice it.

"So," muttered the former to himself. "Slain in a duel! No wonder I looked for him in vain! What else?" he demanded, aloud.

"A proclamation from the king was read on Monday in all the public places concerning a certain Don Garcia de Vega, who ——"

He broke off, and sprang forward to catch and support his father, who was staggering towards the oak.

"You are ill, sir?" he cried, in a tone of alarm.

"I—I have not been well since morning!" stammered the woodman, catching at and bracing himself against the tree. "The king's proclamation you say was in reference to Don Garcia de Verma——"

"De Vega, sir," said Leon, perceiving that he did not wish his agitation to be observed.

"Ah—Don Garcia de Vega," repeated his father, huskily. "Well, what of him?"

As he spoke, he fixed his dark eye penetratingly upon his son, as if he would read his very heart.

"I know nothing of him, sir," returned the young man, with deep respect, "save that his majesty's proclamation commands every citizen who may have knowledge of where the unhappy gentleman may be found, to communicate the same, on penalty of death and the confiscation of his property, to the nearest magistrate, who is authorized to deliver him bound hand and foot to the king."

"What else?" demanded the woodman, in a low, dry voice, after a thoughtful pause.

"I have told you all, sir," replied Leon.

The woodman looked down, as if considering what next to ask, but in reality to ponder what he had heard.

"How is your mistress?" he abruptly inquired, at length.

"In her usual health, sir," answered the young man, coloring.

His father observed him with a searching glance, and then demanded, with a sneering smile,—

"Do you still indulge the wild, insensate dream of which we have already spoken?"

Leon started and crimsoned to his temples.

"I am indulging in no dream, sir," he presently replied, his respect for his father struggling with a sense of outrage.

"No?" said the latter, sarcastically. "I cry you mercy, then. I had thought differently!"

An air of pain, mingled not a little with reproach, shone in the dark eyes of the secretary.

"The fashion in opinion may have changed," continued the woodman, in the same ironic tone. "But in my young days it was thought amusing in a servant to lift his eyes to his mistress, or indeed to any lady, save to understand her command. Men would laugh and place a fool's cap on his head, and hoot at him in the market place, and cry, 'Hail! sick dolt!'"

"If any are disposed to so use their tongues at me, sir," said the young man, with a kindling eye, "I will not say them nay. But, as I am a man, they will not do it a second time!"

"You wear a rapier ——"

"And, thanks to you, sir, I know the use of it!"

"Doubtless," sneered the woodman. "But it may be, boy, you modestly design to inaugurate a new era; to show, in your own person, that you despise and set at defiance the established laws of society in regard to serving-men!"

"Is this well, sir?" asked the young man. "Though you have the right to address me in any strain you please, yet is it magnanimous to abuse that right? Is not something due as well to your dignity as mine? Why do you use me thus? Have I failed in the duty and respect due from a son to a father?"

"You are bringing shame upon me," said the woodman, sternly.

"I, sir?" said Leon, starting in surprise.

"You, boy! By this ill-judged fancy for one so far above you."

"I have mentioned it to none but yourself, sir. Nor would I have pained even you with it, had you not, in one of my weekly visits, caught her name upon my lips in a dream, and demanded its meaning."

"Love and mate, if you will," said the woodman, testily, "but let it be with your equal. How would it sound, think you, should your absurd passion once become known to the lady's household?"

"It never will become known to them, sir!" said the young man.

"A boy's confidence!" exclaimed the woodman, his lip curling with mingled scorn and impatience. "Descend in love to your own level, or you will be the laughing stock of all Toledo."

"I cannot, sir!" answered Leon, pale with emotion.

"Cannot what, boy?"

"Descend in love to my own social level. In mind I am above that level. I know it, feel it; for my spirit is proud and impatient of the condition in which it was born, and soars above it to a sphere worthy of its aspirations. I have measured the height and depth, and the length and breadth in intellectuality of those in my own station with whom I come in contact, and find their thoughts so far below mine own that I can take no pleasure in their company, and hence am compelled to shun them. They call me proud; and so I am: but not according to their meaning. I must associate with minds that are up to my own in intelligence and thought, or with none. To descend to lesser ones, is misery."

"Lesser!" said the woodman, ironically. "You have been playing the nurse to your vanity, and it is grown up into a chubby, saucy boy!"

"Lesser," repeated Leon. "O, sir, *you*, too, must have experienced this feeling; for, from all on this estate, you cannot select one worthy to exchange thoughts with you; or else, as men instinctively love society, you would not so sternly keep aloof from them. They know and feel that you are above them, and you know and feel it also."

"No more of this, sirrah!" said his father, haughtily.

"It is not my purpose to offend you, sir, with impertinent comment upon what it pleases you to do, but, so far as may be, to vindicate myself."

"Enough, boy! Once for all, will you put away this absurd passion?"

"I can not, sir," said Leon.

"Cannot?" said the woodman, in derisive astonishment.

"No, sir," returned Leon. "To please one to whom I am so greatly indebted—for I cannot forget your kind care and treatment of my youth—I would cheerfully make any sacrifice. My life is yours, if it will aught avail you, and whatever else I have. But what you now ask is beyond my power. My love for this fair lady is not a whim that can be dismissed with an effort of the will. It is a something stronger, deeper; and is so inseparably entwined with my being that they are as one, and both must rise or fall together."

"This is madness!" said the woodman.

"Call it what you will, sir—you are my father!"

"How will the donna laugh at this romantic folly?" observed the woodman, with an air of chagrin.

"She will never do that, sir!" said Leon, shaking his head.

"What, boy!" cried his father. "Are your hopes so high? Have you no pride? Would you have the story trailed through Toledo—this romantic love of a serving-man—an inferior!—for a high-born lady? Shame upon you!"

The young man started back, crimsoning to his forehead.

"O, sir!" he exclaimed, his lips quivering, and his eyes glittering with reproachful tears, "is this generous? In what, save birth and wealth, am I beneath this lady? My soul goes out to her because, in all the elements of individual merit, it is on a level with hers. In what does she excel me? In rank and property! Granted. In aught else? No. Why, then, should my love for her be in your eyes a thing to arouse your indignation? I love her as a man may love a star, a flower, or any thing that is beautiful and good. You, or any one, may do the same without wronging her dignity, or your own!"

"You are mad, boy! stark, staring mad! What! you—an inferior and a dependent upon the donna's bounty, to lift your eyes ——"

"Stay, sir," interrupted the young man, hoarsely. "I cannot endure this. You are exceeding the license of a father and of a friend! If you persist in using me thus, I have a reserved right on which to fall, and I cannot choose but to avail myself of it."

"To raise your hand to your father, sirrah?" demanded the woodman, with mingled irony and hauteur.

"No, sir," answered the secretary, sorrowfully, "to retire."

The woodman surveyed him a few moments, in silence.

"See you not the folly of this vain attachment for one so far above you?" he asked, at length.

"Is it folly to love what is worthy of our admiration, sir?"

"Tut, tut, boy; you put me out of all patience."

"I am sorry, sir. I will not say that I would it were otherwise; but it is my fortune, fate, destiny, or what you will, to worship this fair lady with all the strength and earnestness of my nature!"

"You! a serving-man—a dependent upon her bounty!" sneered the woodman, stamping his foot.

"A servitor, if it is true, sir; but *not* a dependent. I am in my lady's service, but every maravedi of my hire is earned with honest labor. And were it her good pleasure to discharge me to-day, I could obtain as pleasant a home, and as good if not better wages ere this hour to-morrow. I say not this boastingly; but I know whereof I speak."

"Do you deny that you are my lady's inferior?" demanded the woodman. "You had best. It would be only on a par with your other views!"

"I am poor and of lowly birth," answered Leon. "In this is summed up *all* my crime. In all else, I hold myself the peer of the proudest he in Spain! I have courage which has never yet been used in an unholy cause; honor, which is as pure and spotless as, when an infant, I received it at my mother's hands; learning, which, though self-acquired, is as thorough as that taught at the carefulest schools. I have explored in part nature's bewildering arcana, and can tell the mission of our nation's trees, and plants, and shrubs; dissect their properties, unfold their beauties, trace their colors and their causes, together with their influences on the air we breathe. I can paint, too, and fence, and dance, and sing, and many other things, that all may do who'll try, but which all, not having improved their time, can *not*. In what, then, sir, am I the inferior thing you'd make me?"

"You rate yourself high, boy!" said the woodman, drily.

"Pardon me, sir, but I do *not*. It is distasteful to me to speak thus of my own deserts; nor would I allude to them at all to any but yourself. But when you attempt to set me down for what I know I am not, it were unlike my father's son to submit unmurmuringly to the wrong."

"Be it so," said the woodman, after a thoughtful pause. "I question not your right to stand up in your own defence. But, all things considered, were it not wiser, whatever the cost of the struggle, to banish this unreasonable passion for one so far above you? What good can come of it? You do not expect to wed your mistress?"

"I do not, sir," answered the young man, hoarsely.

"And yet you love her!"

"*It is my fate!*" returned Leon, his countenance calm yet fearfully pale. "I love her, but like one afar off; as the humble glow-worm looks up at the moon. I never look for her to know it, nor yet for so much as a recognition that she ever before had seen one so poor as I."

The woodman turned his eye down awhile at the greensward at his feet.

"Why did you undergo all the drudgery of scholarship? Of what avail, in your sphere, is all this knowledge?" he inquired, at length.

"O, sir, is it not something to feel yourself the equal of the love-star that you worship?"

The woodman coughed and walked a few moments up and down the grass.

"What good do you expect from so unpromising a passion?" he asked presently, half turning with the question.

"None," replied the secretary.

"And yet you cultivate it?"

"No need of that, sir. It is already a hardy tree, whose roots, penetrating to every part of my being, draw all the nourishment from the surrounding ground, and leave no food for smaller plants."

The woodman resumed his ruminating walk, with a lip and cheek almost as livid as those of his companion.

"What will be the end of this?" he suddenly asked, in a gentler tone than he had yet employed. "You will call up your courage and conquer it?"

The young man shook his head, with a wan smile.

"No," he answered. "*It will conquer me!* Then my fate will have done its worst; and you, sir, when sometimes looking on my grave, will say, 'here lies one who when living was unkindly used by fortune, who placed him in a sphere for which his spirit was not adapted, and allowed his heart and brain to take fire and to burn till it consumed him.'"

The woodman's eyes glitterred with moisture, and something rising in his throat, he coughed again, and continued his walk up and down the grass as before.

Stopping, after a time, he took the secretary's hand, and pressing it, observed—

"I feel for you. No more of this, however, at present. I would be plainer if I could; but—who in Spain is master of his own destiny? Let us nurse patience, and *wait!*"

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH FORTUNE WORKS SILENTLY IN FAVOR OF TWO OF THE PERSONAGES IN THIS TRUE HISTORY.

It was evening, and at that hour when in Spain the houses are empty, the streets and gardens and public promenades thronged, and the air heavy with the hum of voices.

In a small circular summer-house, erected on an artificial knoll in the palace garden, through which the mild breeze floated in cooling waves, sat the viceroy and Don Jerome, the superintendent of the provincial treasury.

They had been bosom chums from boyhood, had been in the wars together, and were united in friendship by the most cordial bonds of natural love and esteem. Each was the other's confidant, and adviser, and the daily cares of office once over, they invariably spent the evening in each other's society. Both were wealthy, and both single—the viceroy being a widower, and the superintendent a bachelor. Hence no domestic or other cause ever interfered with the regularity of Don Jerome's nightly visit to the palace, where he was looked upon by the attendants with as much respect as the viceroy himself, and treated with almost as much deference. This was partly owing to his powerful influence with that eminent personage, and partly to the known strength of his name at Madrid, where his sterling honesty, honor and talent were pointed out to other officials by the king with mingled significance and pride.

The two friends were conversing in confidence, as usual, and each was ever and anon helping himself to a sip of "Muscadel"—a wine to which they were unusually partial.

"To commence a new topic, Jerome," said the viceroy, at the conclusion of a brief discussion on the prosperity of the province, "one thing gives me uneasiness."

"Ah?" inquired his companion.

"This matter of Don Garcia de Vega," said the viceroy. "The king's proclamation preceded his letter to me."

The superintendent looked at him in surprise.

"What does so singular a fact argue?" asked the viceroy.

"That the king, for some cause, is beginning to view you with disfavor, and takes this step to let you know it," answered the superintendent. "Some one is endeavoring to supplant you?"

"Of course. But who?"

"The elder Mendoza is an ambitious man!" suggested the superintendent. "I would not willingly do him wrong, but it has seemed to me that, since his return from Madrid, he has assumed a haughtier air than is in keeping with that of a mere minister of justice."

"I have thought of him," observed the viceroy, slowly; "but the idea was unpleasant and I dismissed it. That man owes his office, indeed all he has, and is, to me!"

"He is ambitious, crafty and unscrupulous," said the superintendent. "An officer in my department openly speaks of him as a dealer in legal claims."

"The officer may have been defeated in some case in which justice was not on his side?" remarked the viceroy. "Hence his antipathy to the judge."

"No," returned his companion, moistening his lips from his wine-cup. "His opinion is based upon an instance in which he had no interest other than that of a witness, and he states that his evidence was disregarded, and judgment given for the plaintiff notwithstanding that the testimony was wholly in favor of the defendant."

"What ground has the officer for supposing this to be positive evidence of corruption?"

"The broad fact that the judge was a debtor to the plaintiff, who, the day after the trial, sent him a quittance for the claim."

"How did the officer learn that?"

"From the plaintiff's clerk—a boasting fellow who, when in his cups, is apt to be indiscreet."

"If this be true," said the viceroy, "why did not the defendant appeal to me?"

"For an excellent reason. Ruined by the unjust decision he, on returning home, cut his throat in despair, and his widow had not the courage to take a step which might make a life-enemy of the judge."

"This is monstrous!" cried the viceroy, indignantly, "and must be inquired into. Tell the officer to give you a detailed history of the transaction, and I will examine it at my earliest leisure."

"Be wary!" said the superintendent. "De Mendoza is crafty, and owes you not a little hatred for letting young Sorbano off so lightly."

"Don Juan was the aggressor. He voluntarily placed himself in the position which ended so disastrously to himself; and since it was his conqueror's first offence, I could not consistently do otherwise than warn him against the future and commend him to his freedom."

"I simply mention the fact that Mendoza is incensed against you," said the superintendent.

"Had fortune rested on the sword of his son in that combat," remarked the viceroy, "he doubtless would have been delighted. But as it favored his enemy's, and thereby rendered him childless, he naturally is chagrinned. But, no matter. My business is my duty; if while performing that, it is my lot to fall, so be it. I quarrel not with the decrees of destiny."

"Still, in view of danger, it is the policy of wise men to take due precaution. If Mendoza has poisoned the king's ear against you, it will shortly appear in the form of coldness on the part of your attendants, who, as in all such cases, will learn it sooner than yourself, and will govern themselves accordingly."

"That the king should listen to a secret traducer and act so unworthily of himself and of me!" exclaimed the viceroy. "Shame upon him!"

"His majesty is as full of whimsies as an old maid," observed the superintendent, "and as little to be trusted. This hour he is a man, the next a woman, and then a brainless child. A good flagellation now and then would do him good. Unhappily, he has no one about him to play the part of the good physician. If we but had a good war now, and he, like his royal father—who *was* a king!—should occasionally disguise himself as a private and mingle with the ranks to learn their grievances and temper, what a satisfaction it would be to mistake him for a common soldier and order him up to a round dozen!"

The singularity of the conceit called up a smile to the face of the viceroy, who remembered the wild pranks of his companion's boyhood, and on these they discoursed awhile, when the superintendent exclaimed—

"But a truce to the old times—the present claims our attention. An idea strikes me."

"Let us have it."

"The king's proclamation was meant at once as a reproach and as the sum of your delinquency. You had not been so careful of learning the true names and characters of the people of your province as his whimsical majesty fancies he had a right to expect; and Mendoza—for I feel in my bones that it is he—having discovered this mare's nest, hastened with it to Madrid as an evidence of his vigilance. Bah! I could kick him!" added the soldier-superintendent, energetically applying himself to the Muscadel. "Still," he added, "there is danger in the knave; and as we are both too old to guard jealously the numerous points which he may select for sly attack, it would be well to call in the aid of younger blood as a sort of confidential body-guard. They could mingle in the various circles of society and pick up what is going on against you."

"You are simply suggesting a system of espial!" observed the viceroy, smilingly shaking his head. "No; I cannot descend to that. Conspiracy shall make me its victim, first!"

"Heroically, but not sensibly, said. In the wars, if you remember, when we perceived the descending blade of an enemy, we turned it aside with our arm, and thereby saved our heads. If, at the same time, we were skilfuller than he, we managed to prevent him from ever again raising his steel. But, as you perhaps may call to mind, we never considered it politic disdainfully to stand still and let him cut us down."

"Very true," smilingly observed the viceroy. "I see your drift."

"Therefore," said the superintendent, "there is no weakness in parrying the thrust of a foe. On the contrary, the weakness is in *not* doing it."

"Well argued, Jerome!"

"In that case, you admit the propriety of a small private body guard, who shall watch over your person and interests with all the devotion of individuals who expect to be your heirs?"

"The Muscadel brings out your wit, Jerome!"

"The question, then," continued the superintendent, who saw that he had conquered, "is as to the *number* of that guard."

"How many would you suggest," asked the viceroy.

"There are those," said the superintendent, "who, in the ordinary affairs of life, scarcely count for half men; others that are only units; still others, each of whom is a whole battalion in himself. Of the latter, one or two would do, if one but knew where to find them."

The friends thoughtfully moistened their lips with the ruby liquor in their wine-cups, and for a time were silent.

"I have it!" observed the superintendent, presently. "It has been running round my head for the last half hour, but I have caught it at last!"

The viceroy looked at him with an inquiring eye.

"What is the name of the young hero, who, when all others were paralyzed with terror or confusion, alone had the courage and the presence of mind to leap, with all his wits about him, to your rescue in the Tagus, and but for whom you were now quietly reposing with your ancestors, and Mendoza, or some other, vice-master of Toledo?"

"Leon Varella," returned the viceroy.

"Then Leon Varella is the man!" exclaimed the superintendent.

"The man?" repeated the viceroy.

"We shall want no more. That young man, as the incident in which you played so conspicuous a part plainly testifies, is one in a thousand. On that occasion he was the only man in all Toledo. I therefore nominate him for your consideration as a sufficient guard for all the dangers that may rise against you."

"To tell the truth," said the viceroy, after a brief, thoughtful pause, "I have been thinking the same thing ever since he refused the thousand crowns that I tendered him for his timely rescue."

"What is he?" asked the superintendent.

"The private secretary of the widow of my late counsellor."

"What, of a rank so humble! And yet he refused the thousand crowns?"

"With a mingled pride and modesty that made me blush to my fingers' ends for having tendered them!"

"The fellow must have the soul of a prince!"

"It is visible in his eyes. As I looked upon him, I wondered why one for whom nature had done so much was so lightly favored by fortune. Were I the father of such a son, methinks I'd not care to be even King of Spain!"

"You should have given him an office."

"You forget that he is in the service of another!"

"Who, perhaps, does not appreciate him!" returned the superintendent. "The fact is, the fellow is a prize; and the sooner you secure him, the sooner you may bid defiance to Mendoza and all other enemies."

"I will see about it," said the viceroy.

"So far so good," remarked the superintendent. "We will consider Leon ——"

"Varella," suggested the viceroy.

"Leon Varella as your body-guard in the upper circles. For the lower, we want one equally talented. It often happens that secrets of high importance to the state, that are but just beginning to be agitated in the drawing-room, are already old and stale in the kitchen."

The viceroy thoughtfully looked down.

"He ought," suggested the superintendent, "to combine the courage and ready self-possession of Leon with the cunning of a fox and the impudence of a pick-pocket."

"I think I know the very man!" exclaimed the viceroy.

"Good! Who is he?"

"A varlet, called Pequilo. The same that informed me of the name of my preserver."

"The knave who did *not* refuse the hundred crowns you tendered him, and who, in addition, had the curtness to ask if you had not a spare place for him in your household, as I think you told me?"

"The same."

"He has brass enough, and, as the information was evidently a mere matter of speculation, doubtless wit as well. But how about his courage?"

"If you had seen his air of easy assurance when he entered my cabinet, you would not entertain a doubt upon that score," returned the viceroy, with a smile.

"Then we are in luck!" exclaimed the superintendent.

"Softly!" said his companion. "We have yet to learn whether these men can be obtained."

"The Minister of Police will deliver Pequilo to you ere noon to-morrow. As to Leon, you must see his mistress?"

"I will think of it," said the viceroy.

"And act upon it," suggested the superintendent.

The viceroy bowed.

"Another idea," exclaimed the other.

"The Muscadel, to-night, is prolific!" observed the viceroy, pleasantly.

"It is a generous wine, when we know how to use it," returned the superintendent, helping himself to a copious draught. "You must restore your credit with the king in the matter of de Vega," he added, after setting down his cup.

The viceroy's brow darkened gloomily.

"No," he said, "the poor fellow has already suffered enough, and I will have no hand in adding to his trouble. If his majesty's favor can be retained only by the perpetration of a cruel wrong upon an already persecuted man, then let his favor go, and with it, if needs be, my head. I never have, and never will be, a conscious instrument in making an innocent man suffer!"

"The question of his innocence is one with which we have nothing to do," said the superintendent, gravely, "that is to say, officially. But when the king calls for him from your province, it is your duty, however painful, to deliver him up."

"If his majesty will inform me where he is to be found," answered the viceroy, "it will argue certainty in his knowledge, and I can not do otherwise than hand the information to my minister of police. But till then, I will take no steps in worrying poor de Vega, who, as I remember him, was one of the purest gentlemen that ever lost the favor of a king!"

"If you will not, Mendoza doubtless will!"

"Let him! Such work is worthy of his knavish heart. But, as for me! these hairs, thinned and silvered by the cares of office, shall be trailed through the kennels of Toledo till their owner's last breath shall have taken wing to the Eternal Judge, ere I will consent to hold my place or mount to favor on another's ruin!"

"In that case," said the superintendent, thoughtfully, "we must devise some means by which to get along without it. Umph! a knotty point! for we must seem to obey his whimsical majesty, defeat Mendoza, suffer de Vega to preserve his head in obscurity, and retain our own position! Umph!"

And he raised his wine to his lips, and took a long but light sip, as if he were looking for an inspiration from the sparkling liquor and was willing to give it time to meet his expectation.

At length he set down the cup, and began to rub his eye with the knuckle of his forefinger.

"I believe," he said, after a time, in a tone of disappointment, "that we shall have to trust to that varlet Pequilo, for guidance in this matter, after all! If he be the impudent, ready-witted scamp that I have pictured him in my mind, he will carry us through safely and enable us to snap our fingers at the intrigues of Mendoza."

"We will try him," said the viceroy, smilingly.

"In the meanwhile," said the superintendent, rising and taking his friend's hand, "let us implore Honest Phillip quietly to knock both his majesty and Mendoza on the head for bothering two old soldiers in this manner. Good night!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

PHILOSOPHY FOR THE FAIR SEX.—So very common is it for women to be disappointed in their first love, that a fair writer has said, she considered the loss and recovery of the heart to be to the mind what the hooping cough or measles is to the body.

* * *

MARRYING OFF DAUGHTERS.—The care of most people is how to get husbands for their daughters; but my care, says an eminent divine, is to fit my daughters to be good wives, and then let God provide for them.

SPRING.

BY C. D. STUART.

Thou comest, like a truant, gentle Spring,
Thy breath all spicy from the Southern land,
And o'er the meads and mountains thoud est fling
Delicious verdure from thy open hand,
And swift unclasp'sts the rivers, with thy smile—
So firmly bound by Winter's chains ere-while

With ice-dissolving kisses thou dost come,
The balm of dews upon thy blossom brow,
And pattering rain-drops from thy Southern home
Thou bring'st, and scatter'st on the earth all low;
And the young boughs of fringed trees, are full
Of joyous birds, at morning musical.

Thou comest, in the softness of a sky
Where gold and azure have a blended hue;
In burning clouds that on the breezes fly,
In fairer sunshine and a deeper blue,
And reddening shadows, when the sun-set flings
The smile of God upon its closing wings.

Aye, thou dost come! with tread of violets,
That shake their tresses when the day-beams pass;
When the fresh wind with soft embraces frets
The dewy children of the springing grass,
And meek-eyed daisies, from the blushing sod
Bespeak of thee, thou truant, and of God.

Aye, thou dost come! and to my heart a thrill
From thy dear presence, like a spell, is prest;
My rising soul with fragrance thou dost fill,
And wak'st the flagging pulses of my breast,
And kindlest God within my heart, O, Spring,
With love, and truth, and beauty thou dost bring
1857

THE
TRANSPLANTED FLOWER.

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

We have all seen flowers spring from the black damp earth; out of the foulness of decay seeming to draw the freshness, and beauty, and glory, of a perfect life; inimitable in hues and proportions, and sending forth upon the wings of every passing breeze the sweetest fragrance from their perfumed hearts. And we who are wont to trace-analogies have thought sometimes, as we looked, why, if God could make this wondrous beauty, this perfection of form and fragrance, to spring out of the ugliness of the black soil crawling and heaving with slimy, writhing monsters, could He not, also, make goodness and the perfectness of moral beauty to spring even out of the darkness of human pollution. And we have passed on with our hearts strengthened because of the thought, and believing, more than ever, that out of evil good might sometimes be brought forth.

In every large and populous city there are quarters which seem to well deserve the name of hot-beds of pollution; where, amidst the writhing, festering mass of debased humanity, young shoots of wickedness are forced into hideous and morbid growths. Society long walked apart with folded hands and sanctimonious air that well expressed its thought: "Stand aside for I am holier than thou;" and, shrinking from contamination, stretched forth no arm of mercy to the rescue. Legal, social, and Christian effort, strained to their utmost verge, had for object only the confinement of the contagion within its own precincts.

Young lives bloomed into wondrous beauty amidst this foul degradation, and for want of early transplanting became sickly growths, and soon lost all semblance of their inherent worth. And then, from year to year, the evil grew—a gangrenous ulcer upon the body politic, which bade fair to infect every part with its poisonous virus—a messenger of death working secretly but surely through every vein, and nerve, and artery.

Not until it was fully time did any come to the rescue; and then, while helping hands sustained men and women ready, if but the possibility were given them, to emerge from their degradation; other strong but gentle arms were reached downward to lift into the sunlight of goodness the children—human flowers withering amidst the soil and atmosphere in which they grew.

A good man went one morning, years ago, down into the darkest and rottenest of the purlieus of vice in our great city This mission was one of mercy and kindness; but he had little to give besides warnings, and exhortations, and prayers, and the tracts and Bibles with which his pockets were filled Few of those whom he addressed listened to his words, fewer still could read. Ribaldry answered his exhortations, and curses interrupted his prayers, and his tracts and Bibles were hurled back upon him with scorn and anger. Few hearts were touched; and they, conscious that no struggles could ever bring back the lost purity and reinstate them in their former happiness, only scoffed to hide their tremors and their tears.

Weary and almost discouraged the good man yet faltered not. He mounted the filthy stairs and threaded the dark passages, in the gloom of whose angles the assassin might lurk unseen, knocking at every door, speaking words of truth to those who would listen, and unheeding the scoffs and oaths that too often followed his departing footsteps.

He had been passing from room to room of a filthy tenant-house in one of the most noisome alleys of the noisome district to which his mission was confined, and it was high noon when he reached the topmost floor—a dark, low attic, with numerous small rooms to the right and left of the narrow landing There was scarcely any light, and he felt his way until he came to a door. He knocked, and was surprised to hear a sweet, low voice—a child's voice bid him enter. A thrill of pleasure shot through his weary heart at the sound, so different from the harsh tones of the vile termagants he had encountered below, the din of whose quarrelsome voices, or hoarse ribaldry, reached him even there; and it was with a sigh of relief that he opened the door and entered the apartment. It was evident he had not quite expected the scene that met his eyes—the voice had prepared him for something different—for he started back with an expression and an exclamation of surprise.

Upon the floor—upon the bare filthy boards, with a few rags beneath her head for a pillow, lay a woman breathing out slowly and laboriously the last moments of her life; and beside her, with the cold empurpled fingers clasped close in her tiny hands, crouched a little child watching with wonder and awe the grey hues of death as they gathered over that face.

The child was a girl of strange beauty—a human blossom of rare loveliness drawing its sustenance, as it seemed, from the very desolation of decay. The dying woman had once been as beautiful, for as the features, wan and faded as they were, settled back into the rigidity of death, they showed a likeness, which could not be mistaken, to those beside her, so instinct with youth and life.

"My mother says she is dying," said the little girl, looking up wistfully into the stranger's face, but taking no other notice of his entrance. "She says she is going away, and that Rosie must stay behind. But she has gone to sleep now—don't you think she will stay with Rosie, when she wakes?"

"No, my little girl," he answered, kneeling down beside her, for the room was so utterly destitute of furniture as to contain no seat. "No, my dear, your mother cannot stay with you long, but God will take care of you if you are a good child and ask him to provide for you."

"Rosie always tries to be good," answered the child, simply, "but who's God? Mother said something about him before she went to sleep. Is he my grandfather, who lives in the big house, and rides in the carriage that shines so in the sunlight?"

We know not how the good man would have striven to give the young mind its first idea of a Heavenly Father, for her words had seemed to rouse the dying woman. Slowly the heavy quivering lids were lifted, and she fixed her eyes on the face that bent in pity above her. It was a gaze that seemed to pierce his very soul—a dumb but most intelligible expression of the dying mother's agony and anxiety. A gleam of satisfaction shot across her still features; then, slowly and painfully, she laid the tiny hand of her child in that of the good missionary.

A tremendous fit of coughing followed the exertion, and then she fell back so motionless that they thought her dead. But the deep eyes opened once more, and fixed themselves upon the face of the child.

"Rosie," said the feeble voice, "remember my dying words. Never take the first step towards vice. When I am dead go to No. —— seventy —— my father——innocent——will not refuse ——"

The words for which they waited died upon her tongue. They listened in vain; the secret of her long-lost identity she had carried with her into the realms of death.

With the sobbing, wondering child clasped closely to his heart, the missionary remained some moments in silent prayer beside the dead Then he rose up and went to the small window that overlooked the roofs of countless houses, and from whence he could see the "heaven-pointing spires" of a score of churches. What his thoughts were, we will not venture to say, but that they were very painful the sighs he heaved and the tears that would be wiped away sufficiently expressed.

As soon as he could command himself he went to the door and called some of the women whose voices were still heard below; and when they came noisily up the staircase, he showed them the dead form, and asked them if they could watch there while he went to provide for the pauper funeral.

It was strange to see how the aspect of death softened those degraded beings—how the look of grief and awe stole over their coarse and bloated features—how the tones of their voices modulated to the accents of pity for the desolate little child, and the gentler womanly instincts, which had slumbered through years of vice and degradation, were awakened in the presence of her innocent purity and the shadow of the death-hour.

Of them the missionary hastened to make such inquiries as he hoped might lead to the development of the secret which had died upon the woman's tongue. But they knew no more than the vague rumors which had accompanied every step of a swift career of ruin, that she had once been rich and honored, and that she still had relatives in the very highest social position. Whence she had descended, or who were the friends of her days of innocence, they could not tell, nor did any after inquiries elicit the information so much desired.

With many words of comfort to the moaning child, still unable to comprehend her desolation, the good man went forth again upon his work of mercy. Next day he returned, and when the rough pine coffin, which contained the remains of that once innocent and beautiful woman, had been borne away upon a cart, unattended by a single friend, he took the little girl by the hand and led her forth from that fearful den of vice and misery, never, never to return

The little one went with him willingly, yet wonderingly. He took her first to his own house; but his labors were ill paid, and there was poverty there, and ere long he sought and obtained for little Rose a home which he thought far better than his own. It was with a pang that he gave her up, for the sweet child, so lovely and so innocent in spite of the degradation from which he had rescued her, had entwined herself closely around his heart. But the good man had learned, long since, to sacrifice his wishes and his feelings, if thereby the good of others might be secured.

Mrs. Bates, the wealthy widow who had consented to take the little orphan into her family, was a woman of vast professions—no member of Dr Textly's church had such wonderful religious experiences; no other one had half the time to devote to the promotion of the various objects of religious and social interests which constantly arose and called for organizations, and prayers, and money; no woman was directress of half so many societies, or spent more time in distributing tracts, or investigating the condition of the poor; her ear was ever open to the cry of the needy and oppressed, and if, as some maliciously asserted, her heart and purse were obstinately closed, she went about with such a flourish of self-blown trumpets that few discovered the fact.

It was to this woman that little Rosie Rae was sent to find a home, and if the two Misses Spiteful, across the street, pitied the poor child, and wondered why a woman who never found any time to bring up her own children, should take any one's else, why very few people heard them, and they who did set it all down to the score of old maids' gossip

But they were partly right at least. Rosie Rae was not taken into that family as a daughter, but as a servant. It was enough for Mrs. Bates that the crumbs from her table made always a sufficient meal for the child who had never known luxury. She knew and cared not that the little one was starving for words of tenderness and looks of love. Rosie, with all the household, was always expected to be present at family prayers, and she was sent to Sabbath-school whenever it was convenient, and Mrs. Bates would have received a shock of surprise had she been told that the moral culture of the child was not receiving sufficient attention at her hands. She was seldom at home to notice Rosie's languid movements and flushed cheeks as she carried the cross, heavy baby in her arms, and was pulled, and pinched, and persecuted by the other scions of that neglected family, Mrs. Bates was far too much engrossed in providing for the wants of juvenile Africa or New Zealand to have time or thought for the well-being of the human plants in her own nursery. And when she came home at night from a round of society meetings, weary and declaiming against the selfishness and ingratitude of those to whom her life was devoted, she was in no mood to listen to the complaints, or enter into the wishes of her children, or untangle the ravelled threads of a score of domestic difficulties.

It was well for Rosie that she had other friends. Beneath the poor roof of the humble, pious city missionary and his wife her heart found a home. From them she learned the noblest of Christian lessons—meekness, forbearance, resolute self-denial, patient endurance of evil, the returning good of deeds for wrongs. And so she lived on in her comfortless home, and grew in moral and in physical beauty, never forgetting, even before she learned its full meaning, her dead mother's last exhortation.

Rosie was fifteen when William Bates returned from college, and took up his abode at home. So beautiful a girl, just upon the threshold of the loveliest womanhood, could not escape the notice of one whose college career had been marked by many a vicious outbreak, and who had never received at home the moral lessons that might have laid the foundation of a truly noble character.

Rosie's life was one of terror from the day of his return. Restrained by no semblance of respect towards one who occupied a menial position in his mother's family, he persecuted her openly, only taking care to avoid his mother's eye during the few hours she spent at home daily. He followed her about the house and waylaid her in the street, till she dared not go forth except when driven by necessity. Her life became a dread, and she would have fled from a place so hateful, but that she had neither home nor friends to receive her, except the poor missionary, to whom she could not become a burden.

Circumstances opened a mode of escape which she never could have prepared for herself, and which, painful as were the scenes through which she passed, she gladly hailed. She had risen at her usually early hour to arrange Mrs. Bates's morning room, and while busy at her task, was surprised by the entrance of her persecutor.

"Ha! my queen of flowers, my pretty Rose, I have found you, have I? You busy little creature, I knew you would be somewhere at work by this hour, and so I have torn myself away from my slumbers to have a word with you, and a kiss from those pretty lips."

Suiting the action to the word, he approached and threw his arm about her.

"Go away, Mr. William. Oh, do go away, Mr, William," she exclaimed, as she struggled to get near the door.

"It's of no use, my pretty one, there's not a living soul awake in the house except our two selves; and you, little prude, you might as well give me the kiss, for I'll take it at any rate."

At that moment the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Bates stood upon the threshold. She was dressed to go out upon some early expedition, and had thus unexpectedly come upon this scene, as she opened the door to give some orders to Rosie

"And this is what you rise so early for, is it, Miss?" she exclaimed. "It was for this, to contaminate my son, that I took you from the gutter, was it? But your career is run—you leave my house this hour—nay, not a word," she continued, seeing that Rosie was about to speak "Don't tell me it was Mr. William. Do you expect me to believe that a son, brought up as my children have been, could so disgrace himself and his mother's house, unless tempted by your vile arts. Out of my house this moment."

Rosie left the room, for she could not stem the torrent of Mr. Bates's words; and as she went she caught sight of William's face leering above his mother's shoulder with a grin of contempt and defiance. She hurried to her room, and an hour afterward she left the house without again seeing any member of the family.

The good missionary's home was again her shelter, and from thence she was soon after apprenticed to a fashionable milliner. Here for several years Rosie's life was one of toil. But her exquisite taste found her great favor in the eyes of her employer, and she had many privileges, though her entreaties not to be sent into the show-rooms or the streets, where her beauty and unprotected situation not unfrequently exposed her to insult, were frequently disregarded. She still sometimes encountered William Bates, but she was always able to escape him, and he was too indolent to pursue her, now that it was likely to give him some trouble.

A fashionable marriage was on the tapis, and Rosie's employer was busy filling the extensive orders which had been given her, and Rosie's taste was frequently put in requisition. One morning the bride-elect came into the show-rooms with a party of friends, among whom were her intended husband and his brother and sister. She was desirous to show them her bonnets, and that they might appear to the best advantage, begged Madame —— to send Rosie to assist in trying them on.

Rosie went very reluctantly, for she always shrank from contact with strangers. But she could not resist Miss Denmore's winning manner, and, as she chatted away to her about frills, and flowers, and trimming, she quite recovered her equanimity, and did not observe that all eyes were fixed upon her, until she, by chance, overheard a remark from one of the gentlemen.

"Did you ever observe such a resemblance? Is it not wonderful?"

"Wonderful, indeed! One would suppose they were sisters."

She was standing beside Miss Denmore, who was trying on a hat before the cheval-glass, and, at that instant, she caught the reflection of the two faces—her own and Miss Denmore's. There was the same pure rose-tinted complexion, the same shining dark hair, and deep violet-hued eyes, and low straight brow. She blushed, as though detected in some wrong, and stepped aside, but she still heard the wondering comments of the gentlemen.

"Come up in about two hours," Miss Denmore said, as she went away, "to No. — —— street. I shall have returned then. Bring these bonnets—the white and the cerise, for I wish grandpapa to see them, he has such exquisite taste."

The party left and Rosie returned to the work-room. At the appointed time she rung the bell of Col. Denmore's splendid residence Miss Denmore had not returned, but Rosie was shown into her morning room to await her. She had sat some time thinking of what had passed that morning, of the strange resemblance between Miss Denmore and herself and wondering, for the first time, why her life was so lowly and so full of toil, as she contrasted the splendors of this patrician residence with the narrow attic room which was her only refuge from the noise and hurry of the shop. Miss Denmore was not more beautiful, or graceful than herself; and yet she dwelt here in luxury while her gold could command the toil of the poor milliner. Then a vision of those dark eyes which had been bent upon her that morning, and the handsome face of that brother of Miss Denmore's bridegroom rose up before her, and she sighed softly and moved impatiently from the seat where she had thrown herself opposite the large mirror.

At this moment the door opened, and a gentleman entering caught sight of her face as reflected in the mirror.

"What, Mary!" he said, "returned so soon! You have been expeditious."

Then advancing into the room, he stopped amazed.

"This is not Mary Denmore," he exclaimed. "Who are you, child?"

He was an old man, with silvered locks and the traces of sorrow and a subdued spirit all over his aged face. Rosie's heart went out to him, as she heard him murmur, "How like, how like!" Again he said,

"Who are you, child?"

"Please, sir, I am Rosie Rae," she answered, simply, blushing and courtesying.

"Rosie Rae!—I could have sworn when I first saw you that you were Rose Denmore, as I saw her last nigh twenty years ago. My child, my child, who and what are you?"

"Please, sir, I am Rosie Rae."

"Rosie Rae! Could that have been his name? Where is your mother, child? Oh tell me, for she may find in me a repentant and long-seeking father."

"My mother is dead," sobbed Rosie. "When she died in that miserable garret, long ago, her last words were of her father. Are you he? Oh, she said her father would receive her innocent child, and I am innocent and all alone!"

Who can tell of the mysterious forces which drew those two beings of one blood into contact, which opened to each the other's soul to read there the history of the bond of affinity. When Mary Denmore returned she found the milliner girl clasped close in the arms of her grandfather, and pouring forth to him the history of all she remembered of her early life and of her mother's death.

The carriage was dispatched for the good missionary, and by his aid, the clue of identity being now found, they soon traced the career of Rosie's mother from the time her father in a fit of ungovernable anger, soon repented, turned her from his house on learning of her marriage with a worthless wretch who had some way won himself a place in her confidence and love.

At sixteen, driven forth from her father's door, she had found herself deserted to the cold cruelties of a husband who had married her only that he might share her father's wealth. At seventeen he, too, deserted her; and, with her baby in her arms, she had again been spurned from her father's door, but this time by a menial under the influence of one who desired to make herself the wife of the wealthy old man. Then, bereft of hope, she wandered away and soon sunk into vice, and went on from deeper to deeper degradation till she died in a garret in that vile alley.

There was no more toil or suffering for Rosie Rae. The quest her grandfather had made for his lost one had ended in her recognition, and she was at once installed in that splendid home—its mistress after Mary Denmore's departure. Scarcely a year had elapsed before there was another wedding in the Dinmore mansion, and Arthur May, the brother of Mary's husband, carried his bride over the threshold of that house. But it was only to return, after a brief tour, to live there with the old man, who will not consent to part with the darling child of Rose Denmore.

LAST YEAR.

In vain you tell me my house is warm,
In vain you tell me my hearth is bright;
My heart is abroad in the driving storm,
And what to me are the warmth and light!

In vain you tell me the trees will trim
Their sad limbs gaily when May is here;
I see but the stubble-field yellow and dim,
Wherein young Rosalin reapt last year.

Though blind, I could go to the very place
Where we sat and talked on the new-mown hay,
While the rose grew doubly red in the face,
Jealous of what she heard him say.

ALICE CARY.

HOME THE TRUE TEST OF CHARACTER.

The great end of prudence is to give cheerfulness to those hours which splendor cannot gild, and acclamation cannot exhilerate; those soft intervals of unbended amusement, in which a man shrinks to his natural dimensions, and throws aside the ornaments or disguises, which he feels in privacy to be useless incumbrances, and to lose all effect when they become familiar. To be happy at home is the ultimate result of all ambition, the end to which every enterprise and labor tends, and of which every desire prompts the prosecution.

It is, indeed, at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate either of his virtue or felicity; for smiles or embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show in painted honor and fictitious benevolence.

DISTASTEFULNESS OF DEPENDENCE.

One of the complaints uttered by Milton's Samson, in the anguish of blindness, is, that he shall pass his life under the direction of others; that he cannot regulate his conduct by his own knowledge, but must lie at the mercy of those who undertake to guide him.

There is no state more contrary to the dignity of wisdom than perpetual and unlimited dependence, in which the understanding lies useless, and every motion is received from external impulse. Reason is the great distinction of human nature, the faculty by which we approach to some degree of association with celestial intelligences; but as the excellence of every power appears only in its operations, not to have reason, and to have it useless and unemployed, is nearly the same.

INDIAN NOTIONS.

An Ojibbeway chief, in a "temperance talk" to white folk, said his tribe believed the Evil One was all under ground, and that their tribe lived about on the top of his back, and that, to keep him from "kicking up a bobbery," they must make him a great many presents. When they drank whiskey—which was pretty often after they became acquainted with the whites—they always sat in a circle, in the centre of which they dug a hole in the ground, and as the whiskey-horn went round each would pour a trifle in the hole for "Old Nick." But, said the chief, "after Indian got to know white man well enough to do as white man did, couldn't spare no whiskey for devil, so devil he kick ground, and ground come up and bump Ojibbeway's head."

◆

An Important Truth.—Truth itself is unchangeable, but man's eyes are not. And, moreover, he sees truth through a medium, and from one position at a time, but the omnipresent eye alone can see it on every side at once. The habit of living in a sect is a habit of one-sidedness, which directs the vision to one particular aspect, and throws others into obscurity. Even the most talented mind, if fettered by such a relationship, is apt to misjudge, to misrepresent, and mislead.

◆

A Useful Rule of Etiquette.—There are occasions on which all apology is rudeness. He that has an unwelcome message to deliver, may give some proof of tenderness and delicacy, by a ceremonial introduction and gradual discovery, because the mind upon which the weight of sorrow is to fall, gains time for the collection of its powers; but nothing is more absurd than to delay the communication of pleasure, to torment curiosity by impatience, and to delude hope by anticipation.

MATRIMONIAL UNHAPPINESS.

There is no observation more frequently made by such as employ themselves in surveying the conduct of mankind, than that Marriage, though the dictate of nature, and the institution of Providence, is yet very often the cause of misery; and that those who enter into that state can seldom forbear to express their repentance, and their envy of those whom either chance or caution has withheld from it.

This general unhappiness has given occasion to many sage maxims among the serious, and smart remarks among the gay; the moralist and the writer of epigrams have equally shown their abilities upon it; some have lamented, and some have ridiculed it; but as the faculty of writing has been chiefly a masculine endowment, the reproach of making the world miserable has been always thrown upon the women; and the grave and the merry have equally thought themselves at liberty to conclude either with declamatory complaints, or satirical censures, of female folly or fickleness, ambition or cruelty, extravagance or lust.

The men have, indeed, by their superiority of writing, been able to collect the evidence of many ages, and raise prejudices in their favor by the venerable testimonies of philosophers, historians, and poets; but the pleas of the ladies appeal to passions of more forcible operation than the reverence of antiquity If they have not so great names on their side, they have stronger arguments; it is to little purpose that Socrates and Euripides are produced against the sighs of softness, and the tears of beauty. The most frigid and inexorable judge would, at least, stand suspended between equal powers; as Lucan was perplexed in the determination of the cause where the deities were on one side and Cato on the other.

There is much to be said on all sides of this question; but at present we shall indulge only in the reflection that nearly all who fail of happiness in wedded life do so for want of considering that marriage is the strictest tie of perpetual friendship; that there can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity; and that he or she must expect to be wretched who pays to beauty, riches, or politeness, that regard which only virtue and piety can claim.

THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

The last quarter of a century is the beginning of a memorable era, an era in which the most rapid transitions are taking place from one aspect of things to another—an era of rapidity—rapidity of travelling and rapidity of thought. Since that time we have learned the art of travelling comfortably in a carriage with as much velocity as the fleetest horse on the race-course can run. We have learned to transmit our thoughts to an almost indefinite distance with the rapidity of lightning, establishing a correspondence between one city and another, that acts and reacts in the course of a few minutes. We ourselves have asked a man at the distance of twenty miles from us what o'clock it was in his watch, and received an answer in half a minute. This was a total passage of forty miles, and a thousand or ten thousand would make little or no difference, if the wires were only continued from one terminus to the other. This revolution in travelling, both in mind and body, seems to be a type or emblem of the era that has begun. It is an era that seems determined to establish the most perfect possible communications between all nations, ranks, and classes of men, to annihilate distance, and remove the obstacles it has hitherto presented to the cultivation of social intercourse amongst absent friends and separate communities. It is a social era, which delights in forming facilities for friendly or commercial intercourse, either by personal visit or by epistolary correspondence; in transplanting the natives of one town, province, or kingdom, to another; in mixing hitherto incongruous minds and manners, languages and dialects; in fusing together different natures and interests, and thus quietly but surely destroying prejudices, annihilating bigotry, and reconciling men to the toleration, at least, of what they do not themselves accept, but which is accepted by others whom they have reason to esteem.

THE DANGERS OF INDOLENCE.

Indolence is one of the vices from which those whom it once infects are seldom reformed. Every other species of luxury operates upon some appetite that is quickly satiated, and requires some concurrence of art or accident which every place will not supply; but the desire of ease acts equally at all hours, and the longer it is indulged is the more increased. To do nothing is in every man's power; we can never want an opportunity of omitting duties. The lapse of indolence is soft and imperceptible, because it is only a mere cessation of activity; but the return to diligence is difficult, because it implies a change from rest to motion, from privation to reality.

HUMANIZING EFFECTS OF DEATH.

Death increases our veneration for the good, and extenuates our hatred of the bad. Those virtues which once we envied, as Horace observes, because they eclipsed our own, can now no longer obstruct our reputation, and we have therefore no interest to suppress their praise. That wickedness which we feared for its malignity is now become impotent; and the man whose name filled us with alarm, and rage, and indignation, can at last be considered only with pity and contempt.

◆

A Hint to Whoever would be Rich.—If there are any who do not dread poverty as dangerous to virtue, yet mankind seem unanimous enough in abhorring it as destructive to happiness; and all to whom want is terrible, upon whatever principle, ought to think themselves obliged to learn the sage maxims of our parsimonious ancestors, and attain the salutary arts of contracting expense: for without frugality none can be rich, and with it few would be poor.

◆

The Value of Economy.—The practice of economy is so necessary to the happidess of the world, so beneficial in its various forms to every rank of men, from the highest of human potentates, to the lowest laborer or artificer; and the miseries which the neglect of it produces are so numerous and so grievous, that it ought to be recommended with every variation of address, and adapted to every class of understanding.

◆

Resignation.—A deaf and dumb child was asked if she knew why she was born thus. The tears rapidly filled the eyes of the afflicted child, but in a moment or two she dashed them away, and with a sweet smile playing upon her thoughtful countenance, wrote upon her little slate,—"Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

◆

A Common Subject of Exaggeration.—All reports as to character deal largely in exaggeration. "I never knew," says a wise man, "any one either as good or as bad as he was represented."

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CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION.

The influence of Christianity upon civilization cannot be mistaken. Admit all collateral and co-laboring issues—the arts, sciences, commerce and general human enterprise—each of which has operated more or less powerfully in developing fraternal sentiments and relations among individuals and races, still, to Christianity we must look for the cement which has combined all other influences, given them vigor, and brought them into harmonious action for the common good of mankind. The possession or culture of whatever is beautiful, has a beneficent effect upon the human race, hence the happy influence of science, art, commerce and letters; but the possession or culture of these alone, never elevated a people to the zenith of civilization.

Greece, with her arts, her philosophy, and the vast intellect which animated her leading minds, subtle and outwardly refined, as she was, was still cold in the midst of her Pantheism as one of her Phidian statues. With a god for every passion and faculty of the mind; with a religion, such as it was, fitted to every variety of taste and instinct, her soul expanded with none of the "fair humanities," which in our less classic but more glorious age, have unfolded themselves as the divine ties of human brotherhood—a family compact—of which the "One God" is the common Father, and in which the human race feel, act and aspire for one purpose and to one end—the common good and glory of man.

Architecture, sculpture, painting and poetry, exalted civilization so far as outward splendor was concerned, to a lofty pitch, without the aid of Christianity; but never, until Christianity had broken the marble gods, and removed the habitation of Deity from narrow temples and gross shrines, to the serene heavens, and unloosed from oracles and myths the fettered faiths and sympathies of men, did religion, the central spring of life, become a power divine, and intensely humanizing, pervading all the feelings and influencing all the actions of man. The religion of the Olympian eras, was cold and artistic; a periodic inspiration, shaped by poetic creeds and Delphic formulas. Christianity, formed and fitted for the sternest wants and the tenderest confidence of the human heart, cast aside the cold theories of the age of marble gods; their philosophies, oracles and myths; and introducing man more intimately to his Maker, as a Father, friend and protector, inspired in him a new and warmer faith and trust. As Christianity taught man to see God in a nearer, clearer and nobler light—in the light of kindred—so has it taught man to see his fellow-man in the light of kindred and brother.

It is here, that Christianity has marked its lofty and divine influence upon civilization. To science, that was only speculative, it has given faith; to art, that was only symbolic, it has imparted spirit; to human enterprise, which was before isolate, antagonistic and selfish, it has given unity, harmony, and living power! On its sublime precept—the simplest and sublimest ever uttered—"Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you," all that is noble, reciprocal and harmonizing in civilization, rests. Inspired by this precept, which the yearning and necessity of every heart prompts to truthful acceptance, individuals and nations have become more than civilized—they have become Christianized. Wide, and wider every day, the divine influence extends. From the heart of great central nations it expands to the remotest bounds of earth, and its anthems are caught up by the "Islands of the Seas." Christianity alone, teaches the brotherhood of man and his common paternity in God. Saint and savage, awakened to its beautiful truths, feel and accept them alike. Go on blessed Spirit, do thy work in every human heart, and the earth will become, as erst, a Paradise!

KNOWLEDGE.

"Knowledge is power," said the great Bacon, and Burke responded, "Education is the cheap defence of nations." Who can doubt it? Who can doubt that the greatness and glory of a nation now depend most upon the intelligence of its people? Our schools are our barracks, camps, fortresses and arsenals. In them the child is trained up a peaceful, but mighty warrior. He is taught there to know himself and his rights; and to know, is to have and defend them. To mothers and schoolmasters the world owes its best civilization, patriotism, glory, and power. To extend the means of education to every child in this Union, and in the world, is of more moment than all the plottings of Courts and cabinets; more important than the marshalling of earth's armies and navies. To educate is to enrich, enlarge and bless mankind. It is through education—through disciplined school systems, which lay the substantial basis for all collateral knowledge—that we rise superior to barbarians and savages. The old couplet expresses it:

> 'Tis *education* forms the common mind;
> Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

Let the people think of it, then. Let them examine the prize which their own necessities, more than the prescience of Legislation, has placed before them. Let them grasp it, too, and their children's children will bless them, for an inheritance better and brighter than the

"Golden apples of the Hesperides."

A SAILOR AMONG THE PHILLISTINES.

A few days ago we saw a bronzed-visaged, weather-beaten sailor, whose threadbare apparel, rolling gait, and eager inspection of everything visible, proclaimed that he was just ashore from a long voyage, sauntering along Chatham street. As he came near the clothes-shops his eye was attracted by the multiform and many-colored garments which flapped over his head and swung on all sides of him; and it was evident that he meditated a change of wardrobe. This fact at once became obvious to the keen judges of human nature and human intentions who are posted at every door along this crowded thoroughfare; and our sailor immediately found himself the subject of the most pressing courtesies and at every step received cordial invitations to "walk in and examine for himself." Honest Jack had evidently read or heard of impositions practised upon his class, and the eager cordiality of the street alarmed him. His suspicions seemed to increase at every new solicitation, and although he maintained a pleased and jolly expression of countenance, he quickened his pace. We watched him with interest, and internally uttered a hearty wish that he might escape the fleecing which awaited him in case he suffered himself to be enticed through one of those wide-open doors. He had nearly run the gauntlet in safety, and we already anticipated his triumphant escape, when a man with a perfectly irresistible nose suddenly intercepted his career. Jack gave one look at the nose and yielded. That proboscis (of which our artist has obtained a perfect fac simile) "hooked" him, and he was led away from our sight into the dingy storehouse of second-hand habiliments and slopwork, whence he doubtless issued a wiser and a *poorer* man.

MAY-DAY.

Day of domestic tumult and universal confusion! Annually on May-day (the 1st) our city, like a serpent awaking from its Winter torpor, sheds its scales and puts on a "bran-new" skin. What a flourish of mops, brushes and brooms, in multitudinous tenements. Noxious vermin temporarily flee away, and for once in the year the whole tenantdom of the city, like the canvass in the "London Gallery," is washed clean. Streets heave and and throe with the rush of vehicles, freighted with household goods and gods. Frying-pans and dressing-cases, madonnas and mirrors, andirons and sugar spoons, China and washing machines, cats and poodles, tilt and jostle in ludicrous proximity. Men, women and children, cross over cold dinners, are a burlesque on equanimity. Fearful day!—on which many an heirloom is "smashed," and many an antique vanishes. Some are satisfied with the new lodgings, and many sigh for their old—year old—homes. To a spectator, it would seem like a mad rush of humans to clean up each other's dirt. We—tenant-folk—are strange beings. We shift like the sea-side sands. Our tents are tents of nomads. Yet, May-day is devoted to the deity of regeneration. With some compulsion, much hope and desire for the better spur the "moving" host. The hegira is not without purpose. And May-days in the order of the year, are among the most beautiful. They summon buds into flowers, lead the chrysalis to higher being, and over the earth and the souls of men cast the odor of new life. So may it prove in the new tenant homes where the "topsy-turvy" of moving will soon right itself, and order and harmony around the new home-hearth be happily re-throned.

INDIAN MASSACRES.

The young people of this country whose hair has been elevated and blood tingled by the accounts and pictures in their school-books of Indian massacres, have recently had their blood stirred afresh by detailed reports of the barbarous atrocities enacting on our far North-western frontier. It seems that in Northern Iowa and the contiguous sections of Minnesota the tomahawk and scalping-knife are again at their old and bloody work; that infants' brains are dashed out on the family hearthstone; that wives and mothers and blooming maidens are doomed to bloody deaths, and outrages worse than death; their husbands, fathers, and brothers, having already fallen by treachery and violence. Burning houses, mangled corses, mothers fleeing through ice and snow with frozen feet and hugging moaning babes to their bosoms, are once more the foreground figures in the thrilling panorama painted by history upon the broad and rolling prairies of the West, which beneficent Nature has there spread out for the reception and display of far more peaceful pictures.

The final result of these massacres will of course be the annihilation of the savage tribes who have perpetrated them; but we fear that much suffering is yet in store for the white settlers.

LIFE.

Life is no speculative venture with those who feel its value and duties. It has a deeper purpose, and its path becomes distinct and easy in proportion as it is earnestly and faithfully pursued. The rudest or the most refined pursuit, if adapted to the wants and capacities of the pursuer, has a truth, a beauty, and a satisfaction. All ships on the ocean are not steamers or packets, but all are freight-bearers, fitted to their tasks, and the smallest shallop nobly fulfills its mission, while it pushes on towards its destined port, nor shifts its course because larger craft career to other points of the compass. Let man right himself on the Ocean of Time. Let him learn whether he is by nature a shallop or a ship; a coaster or an ocean-crosser; and then, freighting himself according to his capacity and the market he *should* seek, fling his sails to the breeze, riding with wind and tide, if they go on his course, but beating resolutely against them if they cross his path. Have a well-chosen and well-defined purpose, and pursue it faithfully, trusting in God, and all will be well.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

A SABLE SUBJECT.

Every day, in my walks, I pass a large bow window on the corner of two streets, in which is displayed the agreeable spectacle of big and little coffins of all sorts and shapes, piled up and standing on end. This is in bad taste enough; but yesterday, through the ostentatious glass-windows of the shop, I saw a little rosy baby crawling over and around them, while the elder children were using them for play-houses for their dolls! Now such a sight may strike other people agreeably, or they may pass it every day with entire indifference; unfortunately for my peace of mind, I can do neither one nor the other, for by a sort of horrid fascination my eyes are attracted to that detestable window, and familiarity but increases my disgust.

Now I know I shall need a coffin some day or other; but to-day the blue sky arches over my head, the fresh wind fans my temples, and every blade of grass, and new-blown violet, makes me childishly happy; now what right has that ghoul of an undertaker to nudge me in my healthy ribs as I pass, check my springing step, send the blood from my cheek back to my heart, change my singing to sighing, and turn this bright glorious earth into one vast charnel-house? In the name of cheerfulness, I indict him, and his co-fellows, for unmitigated nuisances.

And while I am upon this subject I would like to ask why the *New York* sextons, for I believe it is peculiar to them, should have the exclusive privilege of advertising their business on the outer church-walls, any more than the silver-smith who furnishes the communion-plate; or the upholsterer who makes the pulpit and pew-cushions; or the bookseller who furnishes the hymn-books; or the dry-goods merchant who sells the black silk to make the clergyman's robe? It strikes me that it is a monopoly, and a very repulsive one. In my opinion, this whole funeral business needs reforming. Much of the shrinking horror with which death is invested even to good Christians, is traceable to these repulsive, early associations, of which they cannot, by any exercise of faith, rid themselves in after years. This unnecessary, ostentatious, long-drawn-out paraphernalia of woe; these gloomy sable garments, which all should unite in abolishing; these horrible pompous-funerals, with their pompous undertakers, where people who scarce ever glanced at the living face congregate to sniffle hypocritical tears over the dead one; these stereotyped round-about prayers that mean so little, and which the mourner never hears; this public counting of scalding tears by careless gazers at the grave-yard or the tomb; it is all horrible—it need not be—for the sake of childhood, often through fear of death all its life-time subject to bondage, it *ought not* to be. Even the "heathen," so called, have the advantage of us in the cheerfulness with which they wisely invest a transition, from which flesh and blood with its imperfect spiritualization instinctively shrinks.

Fanny Fern.

SOLILOQUY OF A LITERARY HOUSEKEEPER.

"Spring cleaning!" oh misery! ceilings to be whitewashed, walls to be cleaned, paint to be scoured, carpets to be taken up, shaken and put down again—scrubbing women, painters, and whitewashers, all engaged for months a-head, or beginning on your house to secure the job, and then running off a day to somebody-else's to secure another; yes—spring cleaning to be done; closets, bags and baskets to be disembowelled; furs and woollens to be packed away; children's last summer clothes to be inspected; (not a garment that will fit—all grown up like Jack's bean-stalk;) spring cleaning sure enough! I might spring my feet off and not get all that done. When is that book of mine to get written I'd like to know? It's Ma'am, will you have this? and Ma'am, will you have that? and Ma'am, will you have the other thing? May I be kissed if I hadn't more time to write when I lived in an attic on salt and potatoes and scrubbed the floor myself. Must I turn my house topsy-turvy, and inside out, once a year, because my grandmother did, and send my MSS. flying to the four winds for this traditionary "spring cleaning?" Spring fiddlestick! Must I buy up all Broadway to be made into dresses, because all New York women go fashion-mad? What's the use of having a house, if you can't do as you like in it? What is the use of being an authoress, if you can't indulge in the luxury of a shabby bonnet, or a comfortable old dress? What's the use of dressing when your cook can outshine you? What is the use of dragging brocade and velvet through ferry-boats, and omnibusses, to serve as mats for market-baskets and dirty boots? "There goes Lily Larkspur, the authoress in that everlasting old black silk." Well,—what's the use of being well off, if you can't wear old clothes? If I was poor as I was once, I couldn't afford it. Do you suppose I'm going to wrinkle up my face, scowling at unhappy little boys for treading on a five-hundred-dollar silk? or fret myself into a fever because some *gentleman* throws a cigar stump on its lustrous trailing folds? no—no, life is too short for that, and much too earnest. Give me good health—the morning for writing, and no interruptions—plenty of fresh air afterwards and an old gown to enjoy it in, and you may mince along in your peacock dry-goods, till your soul is as shrivelled as your body.

Fanny Fern.

BORES.

What could be a more despicable appellation than "bore?" Surely none. And yet the world is full of them. In the country, where the working-day is practically longer, and there is not so much need of promptitude in commencing, or of driving throughout, the bore does not prove quite so vexatious, not to say pestiferous, as in the city. But he is a social nuisance everywhere!

The genuine bore, if he happens to have any business to transact with his neighbor, is certain, almost, to call at the wrong hour, because he has spent the right one boring his own customers. But, if he does call seasonably, instead of transacting his business, and giving way to others, he bores you with all sorts of irrelevant talk, as if there was nobody else to be attended to but himself! Pauses and monosyllabic answers, that would be taken as hints by others, are unheeded by him, if understood. He will not only withstand the hint of silence, but even of yawns. Only a sudden excusing of yourself, on the ground of an imperative engagement, and an actual start, will start Mr. Bore. And, even then, there is a risk that he will seize you by the lapel of your coat and detain you "one minute longer," which with him means ten or twenty, or find some urgent call the same way you are going! In fact, he never will "take a *hint*" at all. There is no such word in the vocabulary of the bore.

THE LITTLE ROOM.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

It was a quiet sunny place, with simple furniture and a plain dark carpet. An easy chair was drawn up beside the table before the window—an open book, and a pen and ink standish lay upon the table. It seemed as if the occupant had but just pushed away the chair, and risen up from labor—yet the dust of years had settled down upon everything around, and the ink within the standish had dried and mouldered away, long ago.

Upon the wall, and shaded by two half-drawn curtains of crimson-silk, hung two portraits. One was of a young man, and remarkably beautiful. His brown hair, soft and light as floss silk, lay in massive curls around the eager, handsome face and the white and well-shaped throat, and his blue eyes smiled down upon the dusty room, with the same merry glance they had worn at first. The other portrait was that of a girl some twenty years of age. Her face was a peculiar one—straight-featured, dark-browed, and with a pair of large death-black eyes, whose fell intensity of gaze betokened a stormy and terrible soul within. Her straight, black hair fell far down upon her shoulders, and in her right hand she held a blood-red flower.

Of course there is a story connected with these two portraits and the room which has been so long fastened from every mortal eye. That little room had once been the home of a young and glorious girl, named Ninon L'Estrange. She had been a chorus-singer at one of the operas, and had charmed every ear by the freshness and purity of her tones. She was gay and glad and innocent, and she was beloved! What could she ask more?

For two years she lived in that humble apartment, with the beautiful face of her lover smiling down upon her from the wall. At the end of that time, a terrible blow fell upon her. He for whom she would have died, proved false. He married another, and strangers came and told her so.

For a time she went wholly mad. And after she had recovered, the name of her lover never passed her lips. The little room was closed securely—with every article of furniture just as he had left it on his last visit—and she went abroad. Those who knew her, lost sight of her for a time, and thought her dead. But during those months of perfect seclusion, she had been studying her art, with a frenzied desire for success; and when she stepped upon the stage again, it was not as the poor chorus-singer, but as the successful and idolized prima donna—La Belle Ninon. Triumph followed triumph—the multitude were at her feet, and all the luxury that wealth could command or devise was lavished upon her. In the zenith of her fame and splendor she suddenly returned to her native city. And there, among the vast audience that rose to welcome her with shouts upon her first appearance, she saw that recreant lover—saw him start and press his hand to his heart, when, radiant in youth and beauty, she bowed before that mighty throng, and saw the look that turned from her to the rich and vulgar woman to whom he had sold himself for gold. The Prima Donna was avenged!

But when the curtain fell—and for the last time she had responded to those thrilling shouts, her carriage drove rapidly to the little room where her happiest days had been spent. She unlocked the door with a trembling hand, and going up to the table, laid her head caressingly upon it, and stooped down and kissed the open page where his eyes had last rested. She turned slowly towards the portraits, and meeting the laughing glance of those large blue eyes, sank down upon the floor and buried her face in her hands. Glittering in snowy folds of satin, and with a diamond tiarra sparkling on her brow, she bent down in the dust, and forgetting all her triumphs, wept bitterly for her early love!

Many who read this simple sketch, will have seen its heroine. She comes before them nightly, and smiles as they shout her name, and throw their costly bouquets at her feet; but to none of them has it been given to read that proud heart, or to see her, as then, in her hour of deepest sorrow. She comes before them as a triumphant and beautiful queen—and yet never was she so truly regal—so deeply worthy of all love and admiration as when, in the silence of midnight, her woman's soul wept tears of blood for the peace and innocence and faith which have gone from her forever!

THE SOCIAL PYRAMID.

The structure of human society has been compared to a pyramid, and the comparison is not an inapt one. But it seems to us that a strange and unjust use of the building materials may be laid to the charge of the builders. Let us see:

Labor, whether of brain or muscle, has always been pronounced, by the wise, not only honorable, but noble. And industry has always been held forth, to the admiration of the young, as the most praiseworthy of human traits, while idleness has been condemned as dishonorable. In *this* country, at any rate, this is the popular verdict, as pronounced by the acknowledged organs of public opinion—the pulpit and the press.

Now, if this be so, where should we expect to find the workers placed in the structure of the social pyramid? Surely at the apex. And the non-producers we should expect to find at the base, by all means. So *Justice* would arrange the materials. But where has Injustice, as the architectural servitor of the tyrant, Fashion, really placed them? Why, the latter are on the top and the former at the bottom! And, thus reversed from their rightful position, the laborers are being crushed into the very earth by the superincumbent mass of idlers and drones heaped upon them.

When Right, and not Might, comes to rule in the construction of society, Labor will take its proper place, as the crowning glory of the whole.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A sea-captain and his first and second-mates were hauled up before a United States Commissioner in this city recently, for treating their crew with the most barbarous brutality. It was shown that the men were constantly knocked down by the officers with belaying pins and horribly beaten for the most trifling mistakes, and often for no reason whatever except that the officer wished to vent his ill-temper on some object capable of suffering. The poor sailors were in a shocking condition, and the officers will probably be dealt with in a manner which will have a tendency to deter others from practicing like barbarity in future.

The Count de Morny, who is said to be an illegitimite half-brother of Louis Napoleon, and has a high place in the Emperor's government and esteem, has jilted an American belle to whom he was engaged, and married a Russian princess. The fair disappointed's family have taken pains to publish their expected "*honorable* (?) alliance" far and wide, but now they will be doomed to disappointment, and perhaps happily be brought to a consciousness of the fact that it is more honorable for an honest girl to marry an American wood-chopper than a spurious European nobleman.

A young English girl, who was engaged as governess in a family in Vienna, became so heart-sick with the annoyances of her situation that she resolved to put an end to her life by jumping from the ramparts of the city into the dry moat beneath—a distance of forty-five feet. She made the leap, to the horror of the spectators, who expected to see her dashed in pieces; but she had on a hooped skirt of the largest pattern, which, becoming inflated with air, expanded like a balloon, and slowly, picturesquely, and safely landed the daring governess on terra firma, when she immediately walked away without stopping for congratulations.

A war-chief of the Utah Indians named Tamouche, who is noted for his sagacity and common-sense, recently put to death two physicians, natives of his tribe, who failed to cure a couple of his wives. The grim old chief said, with a quiet sardonic chuckle, that as the medicine-men could not tell what ailed the squaws while living, it was only fair to give them a chance to retrieve their reputation in the spirit world. All the Indian doctors in that region are now said to be making great efforts to brush up their knowledge of the healing art.

A young lady of this city a few evenings since dressed herself in a light muslin dress over very large hoops. While sitting before the fire, a door leading into the room was opened suddenly, and the draught of air occasioned thereby inflated the balloon-like dress, and carried the muslin against the fire grate. In a moment the poor girl was enveloped in flames, and although she had the rare presence of mind to leap into a bath close at hand and turn the faucet, she was so severely burnt before the flames were extinguished that fears are entertained of her recovery.

The official accounts of the Indian massacres in Northern Iowa and Minnesota show that the bodies of forty-one whites have been found, while a much greater number of persons are missing. The Indians not only murdered men women and children in the most brutal manner, but committed outrages worse even than slaughter. The United States troops are now driving the savages out of the country.

A young lady in Chester county, Pa., recently got married "in fun" to a man who also regarded the matter as a "joke." The silly parties however discovered that it was no "joke" nor "funny," but a most serious fact—they being soundly married very much against their will. The trouble and expense of a legislative divorce were necessary to relieve the "jokers" from their embarrassment.

The body of a girl named Hannah Scott, who though only 14 years old looked 18, was recently found floating in the North River at the foot of Reade-st, with a rope around her neck and nearly nude. Her step-father testified that she left her home a month previous, since which nothing had been heard from her. She was probably decoyed from home to ruin and death by some unspeakable villain.

England has signified (through her minister for foreign affairs) her intention of giving to the United States full play in Central America, and indeed all over this continent. The Western world is to be left to us; Southern Europe to France; Southern Asia and India to England; and Northern Asia to Russia. The rest of the nations must take their chance.

News has just arrived from Sidney (Australia) that a settlement of eleven Frenchmen and fifteen Sandwich Islanders in the township of Morari, in New Caledonia (South Sea), were suddenly attacked in January last by the natives, and every one of them barbarously murdered.

A miserable ruffian was a few days since arrested for assaulting an aged woman, whom he struck with his fist in the face and stomach with such violence as to endanger her life. He was let out on $500 bail, instead of being sent to the penitentiary for life as he should have been.

People should be careful how they carry revolvers on their persons. A Mr. Shull, from Pennsylvania, while on his way to Iowa a short time since, was shot by his own revolver, which went off in his pocket. He was seriously wounded.

The Emperor of Austria is about to visit Hungary, on which occasion he will extend a general amnesty to all Hungarians who are exiled or imprisoned for political offences, excluding only Kossuth; him, he will not do justice to. This is the greatest compliment he could pay Kossuth.

Mr. H. A. Allendorph, of Clinton, in this State, was recently engaged in loading wood, on his farm, and having worked very hard, he suddenly exclaimed, "I have overdone myself," and immediately expired.

Information has reached this city that upwards of ten thousand Norwegians will proceed from Norway to the United States during the coming summer.

WIT AND HUMOR.

Certificate of Character.—A hoosier was called upon a stand out West, to certify to the character of a brother hoosier. The testimony was as follows: "How long have you known Bill Whack?" "Ever since he was born." "What is his general character?" "Letter A, No. 1—'bove par a great ways, I judge." "Would you believe him on oath?" "Yes, Sir-*ee!* on or off, or any other way, I conclude." "What, in your opinion, are his qualifications as to good character?" "He's the best shot on our prairies, or in the woods. He can shave the eye-whiskers off a wolf as far as a shootin' iron 'ill carry a ball. He can drink a quart of grog any day, and chaws tobacco like a hoss."

Taking the Will for the Deed.—On opening the will, some time ago, of a gentleman who had expended an extremely handsome fortune, amongst other articles it contained the following: "If I had died possessed of ten thousand dollars, I would have left it to my dear friend, Mr. Thompson ——, but as I have not a dime he must accept the will for the deed."

An old woman was asked what she thought of one of her neighbors of the name of Jones, and with a knowing look replied:—"Why, I don't like to say anything about my neighbors, but as to Mr. Jones, sometimes I think, and then again I don't know—but after all I rather guess he'll turn out to be a good deal such a sort of a man as I take him to be!"

Queer Conceits of Authors.—In the present day, it seems to be a great point gained by authors to get novelty in the titles of their productions. A publisher's advertisement announces the publication of a work to be called *Laurels and Flowers*. We have some idea of bringing out a sort of companion, to be called *Gammon and Spinach*.

"My dear Polly, I am surprised at your taste in wearing another woman's hair on your head," said Mr. Smith to his wife. "My dear Joe, I am equally astonished that you persist in wearing *another sheep's wool* on your back. There now!" Poor Smith was floored!

Municipal Corporation.—The corporation of a town; which may perhaps have been called the corporation, from its being, as it were, the stomach, or recipient of all the dinners and feasts paid for out of the municipal money.

True Dignity.—A woman, examined recently at the Sessions, said—"I live by peddling. I sell all sorts of needle work to ladies. I never sold such *low things* as lucifer-matches!" Thus, it seems, there is an aristocracy of peddling—that eschews brimstone!

Medical Student's Examination.—"Do wounds often heal by the first intention?" "Not when the patient is rich and the doctor is poor." "When does mortification ensue?" "When you pop the question, and are answered—no."

During the session of a county court in the interior, a witness was asked if he was not a husbandman, when he hesitated for a moment, then coolly replied, amid the laughter of the court, "No, sir, I'se not married."

It is said that two of a trade can never agree; yet we often see two and even three Taylors (*tailors*) meet, and be very friendly.

Why is a wet umbrella like fat from roast beef? Because it's *dripping*.

IN THE AUTUMN.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

What time the year, with florid brows
Crown'd with the lush and purple vine,
Dabbled his grey-beard with the wine
Of death, beneath the Autumn boughs;

I sat uncared for, and alone;
An awful beauty filled the night,
A vassal sea of ancient light
Bent to the young moon on her throne.

The winds, like mourners, hand-in-hand,
Cried round the buried summer flowers,
And the blue melancholy towers
Of midnight shadowed half the land.

And I, to ease its bitter pain,
Sang to my mute and blinded heart—
Sweet one, stand not so sad apart,
Some rose-leaves fall with every rain!

And though our eyes be wet with tears
And we to-night sit all alone,
Making to our lorn selves a moan,
Some Angel of God's future hears.

And from the highway of our fate,
When it hath grown more straight and plain,
Shall roll the stone that long hath lain
Between us and the Eternal Gate.

The winds that such sweet courtship made
Among the blossoms and the bees,
Weave saddest ditties in the trees
About the joys that bloomed to fade.

And nature, mourning to be dead,
Hides her wet face against the mound,
Where lies her loveliness discrowned
In faded splendor, dully red.

And shall we fold the burning wings
Of thought, and from our wretched eyes
Clasp the old grandeur of the skies,
And mourning walk with meaner things.

Ah! no—we shall assert our right!
To stand above the thrones of earth.
And in our newer, nobler birth,
Put on the crown and royal white!

THE WIFE'S CONQUEST.

A TALE OF MYSTERY AND RETRIBUTION.

BY WILLIAM HENRY ERSKINE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER VIII.

The party from the Sea Bird took their way by star-light towards the plateau mid-way the top of the mountain. There was a path sufficiently distinguished from the adjoining forest entanglement about six hundred yards from the water-side. But as they ascended the way was lost; and the over-arching branches of the trees cast a deep shadow beneath.

"We are lost," said Ambrose, stopping before an impenetrable thicket. "I can steer safely enough at sea by stars, but on land it would take the whole forecastle to tell which way to lay the course. It is dark as Egypt."

"I see a light glimmering high up the mountain-side," answered Vivien. "I am sure it is in the direction of the habitation we saw from the deck as the sun went down. I see the light glancing aslant the tree-tops far above my head."

"Then advance and I'll follow thee," said Ambrose.

"En avant," responded Vivien; and turning a little to the left he found a passage round by the thick undergrowth, and began to ascend again, closely followed by Ambrose.

After a few minutes' steady climbing they came to a level area, full a thousand feet above the level of the river.

"Let us stop here and breathe, my Vivien," said Ambrose. "See! my smack looks no bigger than a spider, and the light on board like the glimmer of a glow-worm. Can you see any ray of light above on the mountain?"

"No! but I know where the habitation is. I marked our course by the star Alcyon."

"You talk of stars as if they were old friends. All I know, Vivien, is the north star. When that is gone, I am gone," answered Ambrose.

"Science, my dear father, teaches us all stars and their places. Alcyon is in the Pleiades, and is the centre of the stellar universe. All stars to astronomers are guides equal to the polar star. *There* is Alcyon!"

"I see; it is one of the six! But do you mean to say that all the stars revolve about Alcyon in Pleiades; and that it is the central sun of the universe?"

"So astronomers teach," answered Vivien; "but there is a terrestrial star that shows the direction we must take. It flashed out for a moment from mid-way the hill-side. Let us proceed towards it!"

So they resumed their ascent, and came to a wide, open space with a dwelling upon it half hidden in trees. A faint light gleamed from within the covert of thick foliage as from a window.

"This must be the house," said Ambrose.

"Without doubt," answered Vivien. "Let us approach cautiously. But what shriek is that? It is Isabel!" and he bounded forward to the door followed by Ambrose.

But we must now go back a little in order to bring the reader's knowledge of affairs up to the present crisis.

The day that Isabel had succeeded in sending by Mark Skelton her letter to Vivien, informing him where she was held in parental bondage, her father came to her room and closing the door, said, with a dark brow,

"Have I harbored a traitress? Is not my love, my companionship, my presence enough for you? Whom should a daughter love if not her father? Isabel! all your heart and all your soul, and all your mind should be your father's! I will not, I can not share your affections with any other. Do not speak! Do not reply! I know all! See this!"

He held up to her a half a sheet of blotting paper. She recognized it as a leaf from her port-folio.

"It is mine, sir, I believe."

"Yes—without doubt," he said, sarcastically. "It tells tales—this faithful blotting paper."

"I do not comprehend you, my father!"

"No? I will be more explicit, then! I found this sheet beneath your window, blown out beneath it by a gust of wind. I need not tell you how jealous I am of all that concerns you. I know that blotting paper can be read by means of a mirror! I took it to a mirror and read half a dozen lines and parts of others addressed to Vivien Falconer! To the son of a Fisherman! The words breathe devotion—love—affection—such as a daughter should only feel towards a beloved father. I learn from this that you love me not—that——"

"Nay, my dear father. I love and honor you—but——"

She was interrupted by Mr. Shenstone, who said, sternly,

"You must love *only* me! I cannot consent to your divided affection. As for Vivien Falconer, I begin to feel he is a serpent whom I have nourished to sting me! If I had let him remain an ignorant fisherman he would have been despised now by you. But in giving him an education I have made him my rival!"

"Your rival?"

"Yes—my *rival!* You love him! He loves you, or you would never have written such a letter to him!"

Isabel's proud spirit was fairly kindled. Her fine eyes flashed and she said,

"Sir, I do love Vivien! I honor him! I can love you also, my father! But I cannot submit to this imprisonment. I am guarded and watched, and kept in captivity. This ought not so to be. It will make me—yes—make me hate you, my father! If you oppose my love to Vivien you will render me wretched! I love him with all my heart——"

"Enough! Him whom you love with all your heart, dies!"

"You will not harm him?"

"I will not let live the man who shares with me your heart! Shall another's arms than mine, encircle you! Shall another's hand smoothe your shining hair! Shall another's mouth breathe into your ears words of fondness! Shall another's eyes gaze into yours with tenderness! Shall the lips of another than your father press your own! Shall the gaze of others be drunk with the glory of your beauty! Can I bear to have you sing to others! to smile on others! No, no! I am a miser of your charms, my daughter! I forgive no man who would steal between me and your love!"

"Love? Love, my dear father, is free and unrestrained. Love is not a slave to obey tyranny! This is not the way to make me love—only the way to make me hate you! I know you are proud of me! I know you gaze for hours upon my face and almost adore me! I know that you even love me to madness of affection! But, sir, this love alarms me! It is hatred towards those I love. Clearly and firmly I say to you that I shall not cease to love Vivien. But, sir, I can love you still as my father!"

THE CALIBAN SEIZING ISABEL AT THE ORDER OF MR. SHENSTONE.

"If I should see that young man fold you in his arms both of you should perish!"

With this fierce speech Mr. Shenstone left her, locking the door behind him as he went out. She covered her face with her hands and burst into tears! After a few moments silent weeping she took a pencil, saying,

"Pen and ink, I trust thee no more! Thou hast betrayed me once—but never a second time!"

She then wrote, rapidly, as follows:

"Dearest Vivien!—The last grain of sand has crushed the camel! I cannot remain with my father! I am his captive. If you love me, I hope you will come to me! I know not where this will end. Even my windows have iron gratings, and I am a close captive. You are my only friend! I fear my dear father is mad! He has menaced my life. He threatens to convey me hence to Canada! You must not delay, if you hold me in the same esteem with which I regard you. The place is opposite Stoney Point, where we are. How I shall send this note to you I know not. From my window I see a vessel that reminds me of Ambrose."

She had written thus far when Mr. Shenstone abruptly returned. He took the writing from the table. She sat pale and unresisting. When he had read it, he grew livid with passion, and departed with a silence more terrible than words. It was already night-fall. She stood by her casement, looking down from the window of her captivity upon the broad, star-besprent river. She saw the vessel at anchor; but suspected not that it was indeed that of Ambrose; and that Vivien was so near.

At length her father returned to her, followed by the "Caliban," bearing a dark-lantern in his hand.

"Remain without," he said to his follower; and waving his hand to him commandingly, he closed the door. Isabel waited with fear and doubt. She had trembled at his presence of late, and a fearful suspicion from his manner and the depth and unnaturalness of his devotion to her, had crossed her mind and alarmed her.

"Isabel," he said, drawing near her, and sitting down by her, "Isabel, my happiness is in your power. I adore you! I have loved you from your beauteous childhood! I have cherished you, guarded you, watched over you with a jealous eye. With more than a father's love I ——"

"More than a father's! How, sir, am I to understand you?" she cried, shrinking from the embrace in which he was gently encircling her.

"Isabel! I am not your father!"

"Not my father! Merciful Heavens! My heart taught me this! Who—what then ——"

Here she gasped for words; but though she could not articulate another syllable in her great amazement, she had power to escape from his arms.

"Nay—look not so terrified, glorious creature! The time is come that you should know the truth! As your father you were detesting me; but as your lover, your adorer, I hope to find the favor in your eyes for which I have for years cherished you! I am not your father!"

"Who then are you?"

"Your mother's husband! She was a widow, beautiful as an houri. You were her only child of two years old. I married her—she—she died the first year! You became thus my child! I never beheld beauty like yours! I loved you even when I had not yet wedded your mother! I resolved you should become my wife! To this end I educated you! For this I watched over you! For this end I sought all means to win your love, feeling that by nature you could instinctively love me, as I was not your father. You now have the key to all my conduct, Isabel! Not as a father, but as an adoring lover do I cast myself at your feet and upon your mercy! Consent to become my wife! If you hate me you will drive me to madness. This hour is the crisis of my life!"

"Leave—leave me! Leave me, sir," was all she could say, hiding at the same time her face in her hands.

"Not without hope from you that my long years of devotion—my deep love—my ——"

"Leave me, I entreat, sir! By the memory of my mother, let me remain alone for awhile!"

"Madam, I see you detest me! I can read scorn in your manner and very tone! I am not a person to be despised. You shall this hour consent to be my affianced wife, or your fate is sealed! I will never surrender you to another. I have reared you up to make you my wife. I have loved you with a wild passion for years, and now in the fruition of your glorious womanhood, I shall not give you to another! This fisherman is my deadliest foe!"

"Spare me, sir! If you have any generosity in your nature, do not compel me to endure your presence!"

"Talk not of generosity. you, Isabel, who have no gratitude."

"Gratitude, sir? So would the lamb's gratitude be to the sacrificer for its wreath of flowers. Oh, my cup is full at last, and bitter. bitter is the draught."

"It shall be bitter indeed, if you despise me. The heart which, as a father, I could not win I will secure as a wooer!"

"Wooer? Oh, no, never! Let me die ere I can listen to you, sir!"

"Then die you shall ere I give you to another. I have provided a place for you where you shall be tamed. My life's hopes are not easily to be abandoned. When you were but three years old I swore to make you my wife, and that oath shall be redeemed."

"Never, so help me Heaven!"

"Take her up in your arms and bear her after me," he said, calling to the monster, and opening the door for him to enter.

As he approached Isabel, she retreated and said,

"What outrage is this, my father?—I mean. sir what would you do?"

"I mean you shall love me, and me only," he said, savagely. "Take her up and follow me. I will bury her ere she shall love other than me!"

This command was addressed to the brute in human shape, who came in with him. Caliban drew near her, and with a shriek she sprang towards the window.

"Harm her not, but grasp her firmly!"

"Whither do you take me?" she cried, with terror and indignation.

"Where you will see no one but me! To a fairy-like palace in the valley of the mountain. It is a home of luxury and love! I will at least secure you, the end for which I have educated you, and safely guard you from the approach of the ingrate fisherman's son! Take her up!"

Isabel shrieked as the brute advanced with dogged obedience, and tried to grasp her. This shriek was so loud, so wild, so prolonged, that it reached the ears of Vivien and Ambrose. They bounded forward, side by side, to the house. The form of Isabel was visible at the window, her hands grasping the iron grating in vain efforts to rend them and escape.

"Save me! save me!" she cried, as she saw the two figures approaching.

"Vivien!"

"Ambrose!"

Shouted both as they came to the door of the house. With a superhuman effort they burst it open, and ascended the stairs to the room where they had seen Isabel. In a moment more Vivien had his protecting arms about her, and Ambrose had his iron grasp upon the Caliban's throat, whom he had found dragging the maiden to the door.

"Fear no more!" said Vivien. "We are here to protect you!"

"Vivien! Oh—let me not go into his power!"

"Sir—Mr. Shenstone," demanded the young man, "what means this? What called for those wild shrieks?"

"Caitiff! begone! Release my daughter! Your touch degrades her. Release my child!"

"Not to a father who imprisons her and treats her as a slave! Heaven has sent me to her rescue. From this hour—with her own consent, she is mine! Speak, dear Isabel!"

"Thine, Vivien, forever! Oh, take me away! He is not my father!"

Mr. Shenstone took a pistol from a drawer and presented it at the bosom of Isabel, saying—

"If you will not be mine, you shall live to be no other man's!"

He fired. Vivien's arm interposing, received the ball. Ambrose caught the weapon from Mr. Shenstone's hand ere he could discharge the other barrel, and detained him forcibly. The Caliban with powerful strength released his master, and gave him an opportunity to escape.

"Do not pursue him, Ambrose," said Vivien, binding up his wounded arm. "I have all I came for—Isabel! Let us not delay—but hasten at once to the river, and get on board. You will there be safe, Isabel—and there you will explain all this!"

But for Isabel's earnest entreaty Ambrose would have pursued Mr. Shenstone.

"As he is your father I will obey you," answered the fisherman; "but a father that would try to kill his daughter rather than let her marry at her will, ought not to escape. How you tremble, Miss Isabel!"

Isabel trembled indeed. The strange revelation made to her that Mr. Shenstone was not her father—but a jealous lover—shocked her. It was intelligence, however, coupled both with joy and horror.

In an half an hour the lovers were on board the Sea Bird, and with Ambrose at the helm, the little fishing-vessel steered her returning course down the Hudson.

We now return to Mr. Shenstone, and unfold something more of this gentleman's character, which will give the key to much hitherto inexplicable. Twenty years before he was an indolent young man of fortune. His influence in directing fashion was paramount. But he was more than a man of fashion. He was a roue. He was a heavy player at cards. At length he met with large losses and impoverished himself. But before the secret of his ruin was made public, he offered his hand to a charming widow of fortune, who accepted him and they were married. Deception always shocks generous minds. The fair wife was not long in discovering that she had married a bankrupt, and that much of her fortune would be sacrificed to pay his vast debts. Her confidence in his truth and honor were lost; especially when one of these payments had to be made to get possession of a forged paper, the failure to recover the signature upon which would render her husband amenable to the laws of his country. The deceived wife expressed her opinion with spirit and warmth. Recrimination followed. Mr. Shenstone in a moment of intemperance and anger at her cutting irony, struck her upon the cheek heavily. She tottered, and in vain tried to recover herself; reeling from him she fell against the corner of a marble table, and thence to the floor. To his surprise she lay immovable. He trembled! A dreadful suspicion flashed across his mind. He stooped to see if it was to be confirmed. Her left temples were bleeding, and her pulse was fluttering with the flickering and departing lamp of life. He dashed water upon her. He raised her head to his knee. He staunched the blood. He called to her. But the spirit had fled! The delicate and lovely wife, unformed to be roughly treated in this rough world, perished with the first rude shock.

"Am I a murderer?" he gasped, as he sought in vain for her pulse.

He slowly laid her head down again upon the floor. He stood and gazed upon the dead body.

"A murderer! But it must not be known. It is fearful. A wife slain by a husband's hand! Nature should have a voice in every tree and rock to proclaim the crime! Yet it must not be proclaimed. It must be concealed. I did not intend to do this deed! It was an accident. No—no—it was passion and crime! I am guilty before God. But man must not know it. No one saw me come in to-night. The servants think I am still abroad at the Club-house. Would that I had been ere this! But her language was so proud and severe. She was so very superior in her virtue, truth and goodness that I could not bear her scorn. *Dead?* I am a murderer! It must be concealed. I will steal forth again and let her be discovered by others. It will be thought she fell in a fainting fit!"

The murder was not suspected. The hapless lady was buried on the third day. The husband guarded carefully his looks and words, lest the dreadful truth should be betrayed. He soon after sold the place, and departed with the lovely child of his dead wife, the beauteous Isabel, now in her third year. He purchased Oak-head, and retired there in seclusion. A strange resolution possessed him to atone for the murder of the mother by marrying the child when she should be of a suitable age.

"I will raise her up to love me! I will show the spirit of her mother my penitence by my devotion to her child. I will educate her and win her heart by every indulgence. I will make her my bride, and atone, by my love for the child, for my deed against the mother. I cannot recall her from the dead, but I can atone to her who remains."

So his life became a fixed purpose to win the child's love—to hope to atone by marrying the daughter, and heaping upon her happiness and luxury, for the murder of the mother.

We have seen the progress of this passion, and we have beheld the rescue of Isabel from one whom, had she known all the past written against him, she would have feared more than ever; as it was, there seemed to have been an instinct which warned her of her danger.

CHAPTER IX.

The last chapter left our hero and heroine on board the vessel on its way to the city. They reached it just as the day broke. Ambrose had a cousin in town, who kept a small Inn near the water side, where he usually stopped when he staid over night away from his home. To this humble hotel our party at once proceeded; and were ushered into the sanded parlor while Ambrose went for a minister who lived near at hand.

In the presence of Ambrose, of mine host, and Mark Skelton, the lovers were united "in holy matrimony," and the same hour embarked for the island near Rochelle. It was a happy day to the lovers, now bride and bridegroom, as they sat in the stern of the fishing-vessel and watched the brilliant scene of land and water, sky and cloud, around them. It was twilight when they landed at the door of the house on the island; and great was the joy of Mary when she was told that she welcomed Isabel as a bride.

A few days passed, and Vivien still remained on the island. Mr. Shenstone had not been heard from, nor seen since the night of Isabel's rescue from his dangerous power.

"At least I am thine equal now," said Isabel with a smile, as she walked on the shore of the island and gazed across to the villa of Oak-head, which appeared stately and beautiful with its surrounding lawns and oaks. "I have no claim on those lands, since Mr. Shenstone is not my father! I have come to you, as I would have come, Vivien, poor!"

"And made me rich with your love, dearest Isabel! Now I wish to tell you why I have asked you to walk with me! To-morrow I am going to the city to ——"

"And not without *me*, Vivien! Not a step without your wife!"

"But you know I am, as you said but now, poor, and I must now put my hand to the wheel."

"And I will help to turn it, Vivien," she answered pleasantly.

"But I had not completed my profession—I have no means to give you a home!"

"Where you have one, my head can find a pillow—upon your arm if necessary."

Vivien drew her to his heart.

He was sorely perplexed what to do with his beautiful wife. He was too proud to let her remain dependent on Ambrose, who, with Mary, opened heart and house to them; and he was too poor to take her to the city.

"I will say with Ruth to Naomi," added Isabel, firmly, "where thou goest I will go—where thou diest I will die. Cannot you write, and with your pen realize something? I can sew and embroider, and while you are writing I can sit beside you and sew; and together we will keep care outside the door."

"We may have to live in a poor wretched place. I cannot make you share what privations I, myself, can put up with. It may be an attic."

"If you live even in an attic—a garret, Vivien, and I am only there to share it with you, we will make it a palace! Love can entwist golden threads out of flax. The sun will shine just as brilliantly into a garret as into a palace. We will call the cobwebs gossamer hangings; and the rafters gothic spandrils; we will be above noise and dust. Then I shall have you all to myself."

"I dare not commit you to such a life of privation, sweet wife! Before me I see trials and perhaps deep poverty. You must stay here with Mary. This is a secure shelter, though humble, from the storms of life. Let me go forth and combat alone. I shall have more courage, knowing you are safe!"

"And what sort of wife—help-meet, dear Vivien, would I be to you, letting you share alone your trials? No—a wife is the moonlight that prevents all from being dark, and God meant woman to help man in sorrow, since it was woman caused his sorrow! We must all be Eves to help our Adams to bear the ills of life. No—where thou art is my Eden! Ask me not to leave you! Think not to go without me."

"You are given to me not to embarrass me but to be my guardian angel," said Vivien, with tenderness and emotion. "I will say no more! I will let you go with me. I know your noble spirit will enable me to bear up, and that I can lean on your sympathy with confidence and love."

"Then we go together?"

"Yes, dear wife."

"When?"

"Monday next. Ambrose goes then to town. Where shall we go, perhaps you will ask. What think you of a little room in the Inn where we were married?"

"It would be a home with you! How neat all was! Clean white curtains, sanded floors, polished tables—all humble but nice!"

"You are resolved to be pleased, I see, my wife. Well, that Inn is to be our haven for a time! Till fortune smiles on us! I can get a small bed-room there for a little rent; and Ambrose will occasionally call and see us, and so we shall often hear from Mary. How is it, Isabel, that so cheerfully you can resign all the luxuries you have been accustomed to?"

"Love—dearest Vivien—*love!*" she answered, looking upon him with all her fond soul in her expressive eyes. Though Eve could have staid in Eden she would have followed Adam forth to share his lot. Am I not yours? Do I not owe to you my life, as well as all my happiness, and rescue from the —— but I will not speak of it. His name shall no more be named."

They were now near the cottage. Mary looking out, came near, and Ambrose also joined them.

"You look sad, dear children," said Mary, with a glance of anxiety at Ambrose.

"No—we are going to the city to-morrow together to try what stuff this naughty world is made of," answered Isabel.

"Not with my consent"—said Ambrose.

"Nor *mine,*" answered Mary.

"*I* must go, dear parents," answered Vivien, taking a hand of each; "I have already told you my mind about living on your bounty."

"Will you make us angry—will you grieve us?"

"No, dear father. But I have a wife! If I cannot remain I cannot consent that she shall stay."

"Indeed, I will not let Vivien go alone," answered Isabel, smiling. "I love you, my dear friends, but I love my husband more. He is going to the city to battle for my subsistence. I shall be by his side to aid him. I will not be a clog to him. Two hearts and two heads are better than one in the 'battle of life.'"

"And where to go?" said Ambrose, touchingly.

"To the Inn. I asked its host if he could accommodate me with a room, and he said 'yes,' with two if I wished, and at a low rent. So I have resolved to go and live there, Isabel and I, until we can see how fortune's wind blows."

Good Ambrose and Mary said much more to dissuade them, but finding they were firm and independent, they reluctantly consented that they should depart on Monday.

"My cousin is a fair man and honest," answered Ambrose as the four entered the cottage; "and so long as he is paid punctually he will be your fast friend, and even fight for you; but if you pay not at the hour, he is a hard man. But we must see that you keep friends with him."

"Not by means of *your* purse, dear father, but by my hands and industry," answered Vivien with the energy and hope of youth.

Let the readers glide with us over a period of six months after this conversation, and interest themselves with us in two persons that are lovingly and happily seated together, only a small table separating them, in a neat, plainly-furnished apartment in the "Binnacle Inn," for such was the new appellation which mine host, Ambrose's cousin, had, within a few weeks past, bestowed upon his domicilium in the port of New York.

It was a room in the second story, and two dormar windows in narrow recesses looked out, one upon the narrow moonlit street, with now and then a passing citizen, the other upon the harbor with its vessels at the wharf and at anchor in the stream, and lights here and there, showing that the seamen on board kept vigilant watch in port as well as on shore. The room was small and low in the ceiling and had a coarse carpet in front of the bedstead, three plain chairs, a table, and two or three other articles of the meanest description.

Upon the table, which was in the middle of the room, were a few law-books, an ink-stand, paper, and a monthly magazine. A single candle burned in the centre of the table and shed its obscure light upon the brow of a young man who was at the moment engaged in counting the lines on the page of some manuscript before him, still wet with the ink, and comparing the number with the lines of a column in the magazine, which the person on the other side of the table was counting.

"I make just thirty-six lines to my manuscript, dear wife?" said the counter of the lines on the MS., looking up and resting his fine eyes upon the face opposite! Such a face, too! How lovely it was. What a fair brow and noble eyes! What a perfect cheek and chin! What a superbly lipped mouth—proud and roseate, and full of beauty and feeling. "How many do you count?" And his gaze lingered with admiration upon her beautiful features, as if his soul was absorbed more in the contemplation of her loveliness than in his figures. She, also, in looking up, let her earnest and glorious eyes rest lovingly upon his pale, almost haggard face, and their expression seemed to say—"How noble-looking—how handsome he is!" After a moment's indulgence of her loving admiration she answered—

"I make seventy-two lines in the printed column, dear Vivien."

Their eyes met! They interchanged glances of sweet love and confidence; and Vivien tapping her hand across the table with his fore-finger, smiled his love for his pale and beauteous wife, making her heart glad, and said, calculatingly,—

"Seventy-two! Twice thirty-six make seventy-two! So two pages of my writing will make just a column of the magazine!"

"But are your lines, dearest Vivien, just the width of the printed ones?"

"That must be seen to, wise wife! Let me count the words in seven of mine, and you count the words in seven of the printed."

"I make nine words to a line, averaging."

"And I but seven. This won't do. The best way is for me to copy seven or eight of the printed lines in my ordinary hand-writing, to see how it will compare?"

For a moment or two they were silent. Vivien wrote and Isabel resumed her needle, which she had dropped at her husband's request, in order to count the lines.

"I make nine lines out of seven in print. I write very sprawling, Isabel. So for every seven lines in the magazine I must write nine! They are to pay me one dollar a column!"

"How can a generous editor of so respectable a journal have the conscience to offer such a price for contributions?" said Isabel, warmly.

"I must take what they offer, were it half a dollar; and they know it."

"What is the story, Vivien, you are writing?"

"It is a legend of the Pirate's Isle. It will make nine columns of the magazine—which is nine dollars!"

"Nine dollars only—for three days and nights' writing, Vivien?"

"You are rich, dear wife, or were, and nine dollars is a very trifle to you. But to me! Why it will pay our board for one week—buy me ink, pens and paper, and leave me two dimes for a bouquet for you on Sunday."

Isabel sighed. She felt that her husband was trying to make light of his narrow condition. "Whence," thought she, "is to come our winter apparel?—whence fire-wood?—whence any need beyond our mere board?"

She then thought of her father, rather her step-father, and his vast wealth, and sighed that fortune so unequally distributed her favors. Yet she repented not her marriage! Vivien was the sole monarch of her love—his heart the only world in which she existed. With him by her side she was willing to endure any suffering—undergo all privations that the future held in store for her. Escaped from the dreadful slavery to which her step-father had subjected her, and happy in the devoted love of a noble and self-sacrificing husband, she wished for no change, only for his sake! She sat and watched him as he wrote! She forgot her needle in regarding his pen in its rapid flight across the page. His noble and intellectual forehead shone white and spirit-like in the glare of the candle, and beneath his dark eyes shot forth lambent flames of genius in the act of creating—of genius giving to airy nothings of the brain,

> "A local habitation and a name."

He soon began to feel the influence of her eyes upon him, (perhaps, mesmerically,) and looking quickly up, in the midst of a line, he smiled upon her and said,—

"Isabel, you are trying, I see, to read my thought."

"I did read it, dear husband!""

"And what was it?"

"Love—devotion—resolves for *me*. In every line you pen I see 'this is for my wife! This I write to make her happy! to try and make her forget the gorgeous home she has left."

"How truly you speak, Isabel! I think only of you! I would dip my pen in the ruby-red blood of my heart if what I wrote therewith would bring you comforts. We will yet be happy. In another year I will complete my studies and in the year following I hope to realize something by my profession. I shall then gradually grow in means and wealth, and perhaps by and by I may be so proud as to place you as mistress in one of the first residences in the city. Who knows? Love, ambition, resolution can accomplish all things!"

His fine eyes beamed with love and energy! Her own filled with tears as if she had diamonds dissolving beneath their lids. She rose up, drew near to him, kissed him, and bidding him good night, retired into a small room, not larger than a ship state-room. He followed her with his eyes, and as she closed the door and disappeared, he compressed his lips, laid down his pen with an air abandoned, pressed his hand upon his pale brow, and leaned his head upon the table over the manuscript written with blood!

We say blood! Ink was on the paper, but it was with the life blood of the heart he wrote. We have said they were both noble looking and handsome! Yes. But their fine faces were marked more with intellectual beauty than with the beauty of high health. Their eyes were brilliant but their cheeks were pale. The transparent rubiness of her lips was the scarlet of slow fever rather than the flower of blooming healthiness.

Six months had passed since their marriage. During that time Vivien had by day pursued his law studies in the office of Burr, and by night in the little room of the Inn worked with his pen, writing for magazines to support himself and young wife.

Vivien was enabled to meet his weekly board bill and by great exertions obtain a few comforts for his beloved wife. He panted to acchieve his profession, hoping thereby to obtain business. Suddenly Mr. Burr was taken ill. His office was closed. Vivien a few days afterwards heard he had died in great destitution and loneliness, on an island opposite the city.

"Was he so poor?" asked Isabel, sadly.

"He had nothing. All men kept aloof from him. No man would give him business. He was regarded as a traitor to his country. But his indomitable pride caused him still to keep his office open. But I know he lived weeks there, sleeping on a hard cot, and living on a shilling a day. It is strange how men hated and feared him! Yet to me he was ever kind, and would have aided me, if he could. But he was in as great need as I was!"

"And now, Vivien! what will you do?"

"With the few books he gave me I will study home!"

"Then you will be *all* day with me! Oh! how delightful that will be! I shall not be so sad and so much alone!"

"Yes, I will study here: I shall not be compelled to leave you. I will read my law books by day and write tales by night."

"We shall be *so* happy!"

"*So* happy!"

And happy they were—those wedded lovers—our Vivien and Isabel! We have seen to-night how happy they are, he one side of the little table and Isabel the other, he writing and she sewing. They had been six months married and she grew more and more interesting and endeared to him every day; for there lived and moved near her heart another life besides her own, a holy union of their own beings in a new and immortal creature from the hand of God.

What in this long interval had become of Mr. Shenstone? Had he taken no steps to recover his lost child, shall we say? or bride?

He was not a man lightly to yield what had cost him a life-time of solicitude and perseverance.

His first step was to return to Oak-head, faintly hoping there to find Isabel; for he could not give himself up to the idea that she was really lost to him forever. But the echoing halls convinced him of his folly in believing that her lover would take her there, and to place her under his power again.

For a day or two he gave himself up to the deepest melancholy, alternatively hours of despair anrage. Suddenly, on the evening of the second day, he bethought him of Ambrose, the fisherman. He at once ordered a boat and was rowed to the island. But he found no one in the cottage, Ambrose not yet having returned; and Mary having also gone to the city to meet the lovers to bring them to the island. Their absence confirmed his suspicions of their full participation in the rescue of Isabel, and he re-embarked vowing revenge. To recover Isabel was now no longer possible, or desirable, he felt, unless for the purpose of visiting upon her some dreadful vengeance.

This idea of revenge forsook him not. Time passed on and he learned by means of his spies, not only where Vivien and his wife dwelt in the city, but how he subsisted only and precariously by his pen. He also learned the share taken in her flight by Ambrose of the island.

His vengeance was like a seed planted in the ground; which does not immediately take root and appear above it in full view, but fastens itself secretly and unseen deep in the soil. So was the seed of his rage. So it secretly and deeply took root and fastened itself all in and about his heart. By and by it began to appear in the light, to develop itself and show its kind. Time to him was nothing so that he accomplished his end.

The morning after the still scene in the upper room of Binnacle Inn, described above, Ambrose was surprised to see a shore boat with five men in it lying in his cove, one of them being Mr Shenstone. Ambrose had his oars on his shoulder and was going out to fish; and Mary was within, clearing the early breakfast table away.

"This bodes no good to us, wife!" he said, pointing out Mr. Shenstone to Mary. "But with him is our landlord."

"Ho—I have had my fears o' this!"

"Of what?"

"That he would not keep quiet much longer! I only wonder that he has not been here before when he knows all that we have done about Isabel!"

"Well, I fear him not! I am a man and I trust am honest! Let's see what he wants. Why is our landlord here? I have paid him up last quarter."

Mr. Shenstone drew near, and turning to one of the men, said,

"There is the tenant! Inform him!"

The man who was the landlord of the island approached Ambrose and said,

"This island has been purchased from me by Mr. Shenstone. He is now the owner. Henceforth look to him as your landlord, Master Ambrose."

Ambrose sighed. Mary echoed the sigh. They felt that the island henceforth could be no home for them. But the fisherman bowed assent. His heart was too full to venture to speak.

"You hear this, sir!" said Mr. Shenstone. "This is my property"

"I hear, sir!"

"You will at once quit the island!" he said sternly.

Ambrose was about to ask indulgence—but his pride prevented the humiliation. He simply answered "you shall be obeyed, sir!"

"To-day! I have rented this island and your house to these two men!" pointing to two rough fellows whom Ambrose knew to be river and sound robbers of nets and fish-houses.

"You will give us time," said Ambrose indignantly, "to pack up and put our things on board the vessel."

"But an hour! These men already have my permission to take possession, for your own term is up to-day."

"You will not be so prompt with them, I hope Mr. Shenstone," said the landlord, who looked surprised at this summary and angry process.

"I shall not ask your opinion, sir, as to my acts in regard to my own property," answered the new propietor sternly.

Mary sat in the door weeping. Ambrose entered and kissing her said,

"Do not let this tyrant see your sacred tears? Let him not know he hurts us! Put a bright face on it, wife!"

"I will, Ambrose, I will try to!"

"Let us be busy. We have no home now but the vessel. We will soon pack up and be on board. The good God will find us a home!"

"We can go to Vivien and Isabel!"

"They have but one floor to the two, and not a crumb to share even to feed a bird! Cheer up! The good craft is a safe home, run tide, blow wind as they will!"

In less than half an hour, aided by old Diggon, Ambrose had his little furniture, his nets and other property piled up on the deck of the Sea Bird. The deepening twilight concealed the tears Mary shed and the fire of anger in Ambrose's eyes as they sailed away from a home which had been that of his childhood and that of his fathers for many generations.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE WAGER;

OR,

KATHY BERRY'S TRIUMPH.

Kathy Berry had been away at the Elmville Young Ladies' Seminary two years, and when she was returned, at last, "finished," to her home in Chichester, the girls all crowded to see her. Grandma' Berry, with whom Kathy had lived since the early death of her parents left her an orphan, was always glad to see us; and we were regularly invited to a country tea-party, commencing at two o'clock in the afternoon, and to end at sunset or later according to the absence or presence of beaux.

We all knew that Kathy's school-days had been signalized by some adventures. Something had been hinted about a French Count in the letters which Eunice Howard had received from her aunt in Elmville, and we were anxious to find out all about it.

It was a hot summer afternoon, and we adjourned from the cool parlors to the yard, where the shade of the locusts was most inviting. We gathered there in various picturesque attitudes upon the benches and the grass-carpet, in *petite comite*, Kathy said. She had studied French at Elmville under the tuition of Mademoiselle Derval, and, as we suspected, had taken private lessons besides.

"Now, Kathy, tell us what you did at Elmville, whom you saw, and what kind of times you had," spoke several voices in chorus.

"Oh, yes, Kathy, do tell us about the French Count, first of all," added one more impatient than the rest.

"The French Count!" answered Kathy, opening her large eyes very wide. "What can you mean, girls?"

"Aha! Miss Kathy, it's of no use to pretend ignorance. You know what we mean, very well; and so did Mrs. Dr. Grimshaw, Ennice Howard's aunt. There, you see we've heard the story, so you may as well speak out."

"I have not the honor of knowing Mrs. Grimshaw," said Kathy, drawing up her slight figure with great dignity. "I don't know why she should meddle with my affairs; but please tell me what she wrote."

"Ettie Graves can tell you," chimed a half-dozen voices. "She is Eunice Howard's cousin, and has seen Mrs. Grimshaw's letters."

"What was it, Ettie?" said Katharine.

"Just this," answered Ettie. "Last summer, Mrs. Grimshaw wrote, a gentleman arrived at the Exchange Hotel, in Elmville. He was very tall, and dark, and had piercing black eyes, and moustaches that hid his mouth, except when he smiled, and then there gleamed out beautiful white teeth. He dressed elegantly, and was accompanied by a servant, who soon informed everybody all that they could not learn from the register—that he owned great estates in France, and was travelling in the United States, to see the country, and become acquainted with the people. All the gentlemen hastened to make his acquaintance, and to present him to their wives and daughters and sisters; and Mrs. Grimshaw wrote that he was constantly invited to all the best houses, and parties given for him, while he walked and drove with the young ladies, and played billiards and drank wine with the young men. In short, nobody had ever made half such a sensation in Elmville as Monsieur le Compte D'Epinay."

"All true, so far," said Kathy. "Go on."

"Well, Mrs. Grimshaw wrote further, that the Misses Benedict, who assume to be the leaders of fashion in Elmville strove very hard to monopolize the Count—that he was continually invited to their house, and young Ambrose Benedict, their brother, followed him about, and was with him so constantly that he was at length nicknamed 'the shadow.' But, that the Count had his eyes open, and saw that there were girls in Elmville just as pretty as either Jane or Sarah Benedict, and that when Ambrose would ask him to go to his sister's, he had been heard to say, wearily, 'Ah, no *mon cher*, let us go to veesit M'lle so and so to-night.' And that his black eyes glancing around at last fell upon the procession of young ladies from the Seminary, taking their daily walk along the shady side of the street, and that after viewing this exhibition of beauty, and grace, and sweetness, etc., for several successive afternoons, he at length fixed his regards upon one Miss Katharine Berry, to whom he forthwith caused himself to be introduced, and, despite all the vigilance of the Principal and teachers, did proceed to carry on for some weeks with the aforesaid Katharine Berry a violent flirtation, much to the discomfiture of one Henry Johnstone who had previously supposed himself to hold the enviable position of the lady's accepted lover. That after the said flirtation had been carried on for several weeks, and Miss K. B., imbued with a sense of the merits of her apparently devoted slave, had become very much in love with him, he suddenly withdrew his attentions, and shortly thereafter left the town. Since that period nothing has been heard of Count D'Epinay, and further the deponenth saith not, except that, to the best of her knowledge and belief, she having been credibly informed that such was the case, Miss Kathy not only wears the willow for the Count, but has also, by her wicked flirting, lost her former lover, the aforesaid Harry Johnstone."

"Is that all?" said Kathy, languidly.

"Every word, I think," answered Ettie Graves, somewhat chagrined that her story had made so little impression upon her principal auditor, "except that Kathy became very sedate and melancholy after the departure of the Count; and it was feared she was falling into a rapid decline. Mrs. Grimshaw enquired of Eunice Howard if the air of Chichester was good for consumptives."

"Ha, ha," rang out Kathy's sweet voice in merry chimes.

"But what about the Count? Did he really jilt you, Kathy?"

"No, my dear," answered Kathy, "I jilted him!"

"You! You, Kathy Berry, refused a real Count, all the way from France!"

"That I did—a somebody, all the way from France, no doubt—whether he is a Count, is at least problematical. And, what is more, that same Harry Johnstone helped me to lay my plan, and to carry it out, too. And, what is more still, I expect Harry to-night, when the stage comes in; and if you are all good girls, maybe you will be invited to a wedding at Madam Berry's before Christmas. So much for Mrs. Grimshaw's accurate knowledge of my affairs; and now if you want to hear it, I'll tell you the real version of the story"

"Oh do, Kathy, go on at once," cried we all, and Kathy commenced:

"On a bright June morning, of the year of our Lord 18——, two horsemen rode slowly down the hill that led to the village of Elmville. The elder, a tall, dark man, rode a few paces in advance. He was mounted upon a powerful black horse, caparisoned according to the fashion of the times, and, as he rode, he sometimes fell into deep reveries, anon arousing himself he would pat the arching neck of his steed, and break into scraps of song in a clear mellow voice; or removing the velvet riding-cap that rested upon his thick raven curls, look up into the deep blue sky, or gaze into the recesses of the groves which bordered the road. The words he sang, or addressed to his companion, were in the French language, and of France both he and the man that followed him were evidently natives. His man, who was undoubtedly a servant, as his dress and manner indicated, bore at his saddle-bow a small and beautifully inlaid box of some rare foreign wood, which might have been a pistol-case, but in the peaceful times of which I speak might with equal probability be deemed a dressing-case. Thus accoutred and attended, the stranger descended the hill, rode gravely along the village street, and dismounted at the principal hostelry."

"Bravo, bravo, Kathy! you must have torn a leaf from James'."

"Not at all, girls, my description is entirely original. But I will come down from my stilts, and give you the history of the adventure in the plainest English. Monsieur le Compte D'Epinay arrived in the manner I have described at the Exchange in Elmville. He ordered the best rooms for himself and his man Francois, and that evening his baggage arrived by the stage coach, and he was duly installed. The register of the Hotel gave his name and title to all who chose to consult its pages, which is the same as saying to the great majority of the masculine population of Elmville. His man told the rest, and the Count was duly feted and lionized just as Mrs. Grimshaw told her correspondent. The Benedicts exerted themselves to win him, and so did the Petersons, and the Vanderhuydens, and the Kingsleys and all the elite of Elmville. Dinner parties, and tea parties, and evening parties abounded; the young ladies were flattered by his attentions, and the young men vied with each other who should do most for the entertainment of the only nobleman who had ever honored Elmville with his presence. The young ladies of the seminary had been as curious to see this wonderful stranger as the more fortunate ones who were in society, and we were gratified. One afternoon, as we were on our "daily parade," as we termed our droning walk two and two along the village street, we saw him upon the steps of the Exchange gazing at us through his eyeglass, and from that time on, we were honored daily in the same manner.

"The Count gave a supper at the Exchange and all the aristocracy of Elmville were invited. After ample justice had been done to the viands, choice wines were placed upon the board, and soon afterward the more staid and elderly of the guests withdrew. The younger remained sipping the various sparkling draughts that the attentive servants offered them, until the subdued hilarity which had characterised the commencement of the feast, merged into a somewhat boisterous excitement. Many a fierce headache was born away from that feast, and words were uttered and deeds done there which were long repented.

"Harry Johnstone, who was then a student in Judge Kingsley's office, had been invited, but a press of unexpected business detained him at his desk until a late hour. He boarded at the Exchange, and when he returned there for the night and found the revel still going on he hastily arranged his dress and went down, resolving to join the guests for a short time.

"The Count welcomed him as he entered the room and invited him to a seat near himself. Harry sat down, with a glass of wine before him, and listened to the conversation that was going on. He could see that the Count had been drinking to a degree that made him unusually talkative, and that his man Francois stood behind his chair evidently trying, with much adroitness, to divert his attention from the subject of conversation.

"They were discussing the merits of the young ladies of Elmville, and the gentlemen were lamenting the fact that since the arrival of the Count they had fallen quite into the shade, the sunlight of all bright eyes falling only upon him. The ladies were flirts, they said, and were tempted by wealth and titles to overlook the merits of their own countrymen. Herbert Kingsley said that they might like to receive attentions from foreigners—titled ones especially, for the eclat it gave them, but they would give their hearts and hands to Americans in preference. There were applauding and dissentient voices to hail this remark, but the Count's vanity was touched. In a loud tone, scowling meantime at Francois who vainly strove to check him, he offered to lay a wager with any one present—with Monsieur Kingsley if he chose, that he could win the heart and hand of any lady in Elmville. There was much loud talking after this was said, but the matter was ended by Herbert Kingsley's accepting the wager, upon the Count's declaration that he would not make the attempt with any lady to whom he had as yet been introduced. There was great excitement and many voices raised at once, one declaring that he would sooner lay his sisters in the grave than see them married to foreigners; others, with drunken wisdom, trying to enunciate some dry scrap of ethnological lore which they fancied pertinent to the subject. But after the confusion abated, it was agreed on all sides that the wager had been fairly made, and then the company separated. I have always fancied that more than one of the Count's guests on that evening would never cease to regret having introduced the name of a sister at such an orgie.

"The very next evening was that on which the weekly reception at the seminary took place, and, for the first time, the Count was present. Mrs. Kingsley brought him in her train and introduced him to the Principal. That evening my acquaintance with the Count commenced, and he devoted himself to me nearly the whole time to the evident discomfiture of the Kingsleys, and of my school-mates also.

"Harry Johnstone watched us closely. I will not pretend to say that he was not a little jealous, for I was weak enough to feel flattered by attentions that, had I known all, would have been repulsed with indignation. The next morning Harry joined me in my early walk, and after he had lectured me sufficiently, and I had promised reformation with all due submission, he grew pleasant and confidential and related to me the scene at the Count's supper. 'Now I had the reputation of an heiress in Elmville, and though Harry vowed that my beauty (isn't it remarkable, girls?) was enough to attract the attention and win the love of any one, even the most distinguished foreigner, and nobleman to boot, yet he feared that the rumor of my more solid charms had reached the Count's ear. It was probable, in view of this, and of the terms of his wager, that I was the victims elected for his arts, and before we parted that morning Harry and I had resolved upon a plan of action which would, if well sustained, not only deprive the Count of his wager, but cover him with confusion. All the men present at the Count's supper had pledged themselves to secresy in relation to the wager, except Harry. He had not participated in the matter in any way, and had declined making any pledge.

"It was soon known in Elmville that the Count was my admirer. I confess to some feelings of self-complacency as I saw myself the object of intense devotion from one who was the 'observed of all observers,' and whom all desired to win. We walked, and rode, and chatted. I listened with downcast eyes to his expressions of admiration, and to his glowing descriptions of the sunny land where his ancestral home reared its proud turrets, but just as the words that asked me to become its mistress trembled on his lips, I would find some cause for breaking off the conversation.

"I would describe my home to him, and my stately grandmother presiding in it with all the dignity of a lady of the old school. He would hope that he might some day be introduced to 'Madame Berri—a name he knew in his own France,' and hint that he had something to ask of her 'very precious, *tres* belle.' Then I would look unconscious, and straightway talk of something else.

"Thus I led him on, exerting myself in coquetry, and doing many a violence both to feeling and principle, I am afraid. At any rate, Harry often accused me of giving the Count too many tender glances, and of talking with him in that low tone and rapt manner that no girl's lover likes to see her use toward another, while I hated myself, at times, for the deception I was practising. Even the end I had in view—the discomfiture of an empty boaster, and the defeat of one whom I more than suspected to be a fortune-hunter, failed always to sanctify the means to my conscience. But I was determined that he should love me before his idle boast was put to the test.

"Thus week after week wore on, till the time of the Count's stay at Elmville came to be reckoned by months. At last I was sure that I had my victim in my toils. And then I let him speak. Girls, there had been a great deal of acting in his devotion, but that scene was real, I would stake my life upon it. From my very soul I pitied him—though I was morally convinced that he was an impostor, in all besides his very real love—but I had nothing to yield in return, and now that the goal of my efforts was attained, I must not falter. I coolly informed him that from the first I had been aware of the wager he had made, and had taken good care that my heart should not be won by placing it in the safe keeping of another before his suit commenced. He begged and besought with an abjectness, that could not have been stimulated after such an avowal on my part, that I would yield him some hope for the future, but I told him that his prayers were vain, and begged him to ponder well the lesson he had received, and remember always that there was at least one American girl who could resist the fascinations of a title, and vineyards, and chateaux in sunny France—whose heart and hand were not to be bidden for, or won as a wager, but freely bestowed where they would meet a like return. And, when he asked me if I had no pity, I told him yes, but only such pity as one must feel for all who fall into the net of their own folly. And so I bade him farewell, and left him to his fate.

"He remained a week longer in Elmville, dogging my footsteps, or gliding before me with his pale, mournful face half displayed, in all my walks; while he kept Francois busily employed in bringing me billet-doux, and coming to fetch answers that were never written. Then, apparently convinced that his efforts were useless, he took his departure, and Elmville knew him no more.

"Now, girls, I have given you the whole story. I think it quite probable that I might have seemed more sedate after the Count's departure, for, successful as my plan had proved, I was not quite on good terms with myself. I think there can be no task more distressing than to repulse real honest love with coldness, and when one feels, as I did, that she has exerted every effort to win that love for the very purpose of crushing it, even though she may deem the punishment well deserved, it cannot be given without a pang."

"Have you ever heard from him since, Kathy?" asked Ettie Graves.

"One letter came to me, dear, post-marked New York. I gave it, unread, to Harry Johnstone, and he re-mailed it to the Count. But there is the stage, at this moment stopping at the gate. What have we been thinking of not to hear it?"

The lumbering vehicle that formed the only communication with the distant railroad, had just driven up. A tall young man alighted, and having assisted the driver in extricating his baggage from the crowded "boot," turned hastily and entered the gate. Kathy advanced to meet him with a beautiful blush and smile upon her face, and we had time to observe his fine open countenance, and decide that he was quite worthy of Kathy, before their hurried greetings were over, and they joined the group.

"Kathy tells me she has been giving you the story of the Count, and representing me as a jealous Blue-beard-ish fellow," he said, as soon as introductions were over. "Now I leave it to you all, ladies, have I not reason to be jealous of such an experienced coquette?"

We all laughed, and little Ettie Graves spoke:

"Indeed, sir, if you had heard her mention your name this afternoon, I don't think you would ever be jealous again. If ever any one loves me, I hope he will speak my name in just such a tone."

We all laughed again at this sally, Harry louder than the rest, and he bent a proud look from his dark eyes upon Kathy that kindled the beautiful blushes again. And then Grandma' Berry called us in to tea. We had a merry meal, only Kathy was more silent than usual, and when it was over, we instinctively prepared to go home, feeling that we must leave the lovers to themselves.

The next Christmas eve we were all bidden to a wedding at Grandma' Berry's, and Kathy and Harry stood side by side, and vowed the vows that bound them for life. On Kathy's face rested a look of perfect happiness, and I was sure that when Harry looked at her he felt, in the depths of a quiet heart, that her love was immovable, and that no jealous fears need ever enter there to mar his peace.

A LITTLE BUT IMPORTANT FACT.—He who endeavors to please must appear pleased, and he who would not provoke rudeness must not practice it.

GRANDPAPA AND HIS GRANDCHILDREN.

WRITTEN FOR A FAMILY MEETING.

We are coming! we are coming!
What a merry host! ha, ha!
Laughing, shouting, singing, drumming,
We are coming, Grandpapa!

Here are Henrys, by the dozen;
Here are Marys, half-a-score!
Brother, sister, aunt and cousin,
We are coming—many more!

We are coming! Willies, Lucys,
Anns and Lizzies, two and two;
Frank and Robert, little *gooses*,
We can find no mate for you.

We are coming! Edwards, Johnnys,
Harriet, Richard, George, Louise;
Lads and lasses, little cronies,
All are coming—what a squeeze!

We are coming! Don't you hear us?
What a glorious noise we make!
Grandmamma, you well may fear us,
With your lemonade and cake.

We are coming! O believe us,
Happy, joyful, *glad*, hurrah!
In your open arms receive us,
With your blessing, Grandpapa!

THE TWO OFFERS.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

CHAPTER I.

"A contented mind is a continual feast."

The words fell, half unconsciously, from the lips of a young girl, who stood in the door of her father's cottage and looked out upon his pleasant farm.

It was a lovely scene on which her eyes rested. Across the road, and before the house, a fine orchard sloped down to the pastures, where the flocks and herds of Milton Ainslie were grazing. At her right hand a smooth, level stretch of green-sward, with an old well-sweep rising toward the sky, lay smiling in the afternoon sunlight, and at her left, a flower-garden that had been planted by her own hands filled the air with fragrance. Old Rover, the house-dog, crouched at her feet, wagging his feathery tail, and trying, vainly, to catch her eye, but for once he was unheeded.

A fair, open, smiling face, had Sarah Ainslie naturally, but now it was overshadowed by a frown, and the dark blue eyes looked half sad, half angry.

"A contented mind is a continual feast," she repeated, thoughtfully. "So father often tells me, and I suppose it must be true. But I never can have that here. I cannot be contented in this lonely, out of the way village, and I don't like to live on a farm. It is weary work."

"Sally, I want you," said a pleasant voice in the house.

She turned away with a fretful sigh.

"Yes, that is always the way. I almost hate the sound of my own name. Why can't they call me Sarah?"

She went into the kitchen with a lagging step, fully expecting to be set at some household task. But her mother sat in her great easy chair and her father was lying on the settee at her side. Two open letters were on the little round stand before them, and both were looking very grave.

"Come here, Sally," said her mother. "Sit down beside us. We wish to talk with you."

The girl sat down on a low footstool beside her father, and laid her head down beside his. He stroked her dark brown hair, fondly

"You are now eighteen years old, Sally," said her mother. "Quite a young woman. I was married at that age, Sally"

"And you are the picture of your mother, Sally, as I saw her on her wedding day," said the old man, fondly.

"Other people besides us have seen that you are a woman," resumed her mother, after exchanging an affectionate look with her husband. "Here, on this table before me, are two offers of marriage for you."

"For me, mother?"

Sally started up now, with looks full of interest.

"Yes, for you."

"Let me see them. Who are they from, mother?"

"One is from John Grant."

The girl's face was suffused with a deep crimson flush.

"The other, from old Mr. Lovelace, the millionare."

She was pale now, as death. She held out her hand for the letters. Her mother gave them to her, and watching her narrowly, saw that the young farmer's was read first.

It was a frank, honest, manly letter. The young man asked for their daughter as if she was the most precious thing on earth. It was evident how deeply and tenderly he loved her. His affection stamped itself in every line.

But the old man wooed the girl in a different strain. He said little of his love, but spoke eloquently of the splendid city home made ready for his bride, of the diamonds she should wear, and the proud and aristocratic circle over which she should reign. The girl's cheek flushed, and her eyes sparkled as she read. The glow at her heart faded away in the glitter of those unseen jewels, and she laid the letters back upon the table with an air that showed her mind was fully made up.

"Well, my daughter," said her mother, gently.

Sally colored and hung down her head.

"Mother, I like John Grant very much, but only as a friend, I think. I don't want to marry him."

The old man started to his feet.

"What! is it Sally that is speaking so? Is it my girl that has encouraged an honest fellow to love her, and now casts him off like a worthless thing, because an old doting fool, old enough to be her grandfather, offers her a few pieces of colored glass? Sally—I—I——"

"Husband!"

The gentle hand laid upon his arm, and the gentle eyes that met his own, quieted his rage. He sat down again and sighed heavily.

"Well, Sally, I have always said you should marry to please yourself, and I'll keep my word. Not another word will I say against it. But remember, as you make your bed, so you must lie in it; and mark my words, you will rue the day when you marry Simon Lovelace for his money Oh, that I should see a daughter of mine——"

He checked himself, and rushed out of the room. He had taken an unwise course. The girl might have been won over by gentleness, but now all the pride of her nature rose up within her at her father's words. Her mother sighed as she looked at her, and felt that all persuasions would be useless now.

"Sally, you little know what marriage is," she said at last. "I am afraid it is the gold and not the man you covet. Think for a moment. Can you love, honor and obey him?"

The girl's proud lip curled scornfully.

"Can you bear to spend your whole life with him—to give him all your thoughts, all your love—can you be true to him, my child, and cling to him as well in adversity as prosperity? Think seriously."

"Mother, I will try."

But the girl's face was averted, and her voice trembled. Mrs. Ainslie sighed, but the next moment her face brightened as she saw a gay, handsome young man leap the fence, as if disdaining the gate, and come up to the door.

"Here comes one who can, perhaps, do more towards changing your resolution than I," she said. "I will leave you to talk to him."

Sarah looked up as her mother left the room, and there upon the threshold stood John Grant, his fine face glowing with hope and pleasure.

"Oh, this is cruel!" she exclaimed. And springing to her feet, she would have left the room. But he stopped her.

"Why, Sarah, how is this?" he asked, playfully. "You are not going to run away from me, just because I have spoken out plainly, as an honest man should, are you? It has been hard waiting for a year back, and you were so kind and gentle with me last Sunday night, that I thought I must try my fate at once."

The young girl groaned at the recollection of that Sunday night, so full of innocent happiness.

"Let me pass," she said, coldly.

"Not I, till you tell me what is the matter," he answered, taking both her hands in his. She tried to free them, but he held them fast.

"Is it because I was vexed, last night, when you stopped in the dance, to let old Simon Lovelace fix the rosebud in your hair? Come—I will confess that I was wrong. I ought to have known you better. For me to be jealous of the old man, was perhaps rather ridiculous. But you shall never find me so again. Only say you will be mine, and he may kiss my bride on her wedding-day, if he likes. What, still silent? I tell you I will never care for him again."

"Never?" she echoed, looking up in his face with a dreary smile. "And yet you have greater cause than ever, for I am going to marry him."

The young man started back, as if he had got a blow. "Sarah, you are not in earnest."

"I am going to marry Mr. Lovelace!" she repeated.

There was no need of freeing her hands now—he dropped them of his own accord, and stood looking at her in silence.

"And so you have been trifling with me for a year back," he exclaimed, in bitter scorn. "Laughing in your sleeve at your poor dupe, I have no doubt, and setting your trap for the withered old miser. Woman, if I had not loved you so tenderly and truly, I could hate you as I would hate a fiend. Do you know what you have done? My misery will be your curse. I shall be with you in your splendid home, and everything you see or hear shall remind you of the man you have ruined. Here is your picture," he added, fiercely, tearing it from his neck. "Take it, and the golden chain with it, since you love gold so well. Or let it lie there." He threw it upon the floor at her feet, and turned away.

"May God forgive you!" he said, as he turned at the door to take a last look at the fair false face that had worked his rain. "May God forgive you, and pity me!"

She lifted the despised picture from the floor, and gazing at the smiling innocent face (so different from hers at that moment), hid it in her bosom, and burst into tears. But when her mother entered, she was calm, and saying, simply,—

"I shall marry Mr. Lovelace, mother," went to her own room.

The marriage was a dreary one. The old farmer kept his word, and said nothing more against his daughter's choice, but she read volumes in his clear blue eye. And when the vows were all spoken, and she turned away from her husband to hide her face upon her mother's breast, and hear her low, fond blessing, she wished with all her heart that she might die then, and be at rest.

But death comes oftenest to the happy. Sarah tried to love her husband—she was certainly grateful to him for the elegant home in which he placed her, and the jewels he lavished with a willing hand to deck his young bride. But sometimes, when she stood in a gay and fashionable crowd, blazing with diamonds, and the envy of half the city, a memory of her country home would come up suddenly before her, and the words she had uttered on that most eventful day, seemed written in letters of fire wherever she turned her eyes. "A contented mind is a continual feast." Her heart sank within her as she remembered the words, and saw the fearful mistake she had made.

There were not wanting those among the gay throng of her acquaintances, who would gladly have won the ear of the beautiful Mrs. Lovelace with their words of flattery. But, with all her faults, she was a good and virtuous woman. The lessons her pious mother had implanted in her young heart were not all lost, and she was true, in word and deed, to the husband who had learned to idolize her.

A love so pure, and true, and deep as his, could not fail, at last, to meet with its reward. By degrees she banished the image of her rejected lover from her mind, and devoted herself to her husband. He little guessed the secret of her fond attentions, little knew that she was so kind, so gentle, and so good, in penance for the sin she had committed in marrying him; but he fancied that she loved him, and the old man was happy.

Sickness came at last, and laid him prostrate upon his bed. Sarah felt a strange pang of remorse at the thought that he might die, and watched beside him night and day. All that the most faithful love could have prompted was done, but the old man's days were numbered. And they roused her from the deep sleep of utter weariness and exhaustion, late one night, to see him die.

She knelt beside him, and kissed him fondly. He laid his trembling hand upon her head with a tender smile.

"From the hour of our marriage," he said, speaking with great difficulty, "you have been my pride and joy. You have been a good wife, and you will have your reward. Perhaps I was too old, but that is all past now. Kiss me, my dear child."

Her tears fell fast upon his pale face, as she bent to press her lips to his. She felt them growing cold, and sank down with her head lying upon his breast. Never had she felt so utterly alone as then. And as she gazed upon the closed eyes, and the happy smile that still lingered around his lips, she thanked God in her heart that he had never known the truth. In that hour of anguish her dead husband was far nearer to her heart than the living lover, in all the flush of youth and passion, had ever been!

CHAPTER II.

A little thinner, a little paler, and more quiet in look and voice and manner, the young widow moved once more around the humble farmhouse of her father. Those of her acquaintances who had kept aloof, at first upon her return, fearful that the wealth which seemed almost fabulous in their eyes, would make her unbearably proud and haughty, were agreeably surprised to find her greeting them even more cordially than before, and looking so pale and interesting in her simple mourning that they went away much more delighted with Mrs. Lovelace than they had ever been with Sally Ainslie.

The whole village was ringing with her praises. One told how kindly she had greeted her, and how she had insisted on making her a present of a beautiful book muslin—another displayed a set of corals, as a token of her liberality, a third waxed eloquent in her favor over a splendid annual, which had just been received—and a fourth went into ecstasies at the sight of a portfolio of new music, which was just what she had been longing for, for many a day. Then, too, the old familiar furniture of the cottage had not been thrown aside for any useless city trumpery; the old easy chairs and pine tables were in their usual places, and some chance visitor at the cottage had seen Mrs. Lovelace eating bread and milk out of the old-fashioned pewter porringer, with as great a relish as if she had never seen her magnificent services of silver and Sevres china. If Sarah had tried her best to resume her old footing in her native place, she had accomplished all she wished.

But there was one person who listened to all these accounts of the pretty widow, with a lowering brow. From the day of her marriage John Grant had never been known to speak her name. But neither had he been seen to pay any attention to another, though scores of pretty girls were ready and willing to "set their caps" for him. John was considered, by intriguing mothers, and coquettish daughters, as the best match in the place, and eagerly sought after on that account. But the efforts of all were in vain. He was always gallant and polite, but never tender—and the mere mention of Mrs. Lovelace's name would drive the blood from his cheek, and set his heart to beating so loudly, that he fancied it must be heard on every side of the room.

The wiseacres of the village wagged their heads and smiled knowingly at Mrs. Lovelace's return Indeed, one of them went so far as to pour out all these symptoms of unswerving love to their fair object. But much to the good lady's astonishment, Sarah neither smiled nor blushed. She trembled a little—turned pale, and then burst into a flood of passionate tears.

"I did not come home to be insulted with stories of—that man, Mrs. Smith," she cried, indignantly. "If you wish to keep my frendship—never, never mention his name to me again!"

She hurried out of the room as she spoke, and left the newsmonger to spread the story as rapidly as she chose. As a matter of course, John Grant heard it before he was twenty-four hours older. He turned away with a careless laugh, but still the tale haunted him, and he found himself wondering, a dozen times that day, as he followed the plough, what such strange agitation could mean. Could it be, after all that, Sarah remembered and loved him? His heart leaped up within him at the thought.

"I will go over there to-night, and ask her like a man," he said to himself, at sunset, as he drove his cattle slowly toward home. "It's no use my trying to live this way. To see her every day in the street, or at the window of her room, and yet to say nothing, is too much for me to bear. If she will take me, I may yet be a happy man—if not—why the sooner I am off, and far away from this village, the better."

Having come to this resolution, John Grant saw his cattle safely bestowed for the night, and went up to his own room to dress for the eventful interview. John was no city dandy. He was simply a handsome, healthy, and robust young farmer, and yet when he had donned his suit of black broadcloth, and brushed his curly hair and flowing beard before the glass, I doubt if Broadway could show a finer specimen of manhood than he. True, his cheek was sunburnt, and his hands were rough and brown, but his heart was in the right place, and his face, with its honest, fearless expression, was such an one as any woman might admire and love. I am sure I should have done so. After one half satisfied look at himself, John went down into the kitchen, and took his seat at his mother's table. His little sister had already climbed into the high chair beside his own, and was prattling away about some gift she had received.

"The lady gave it to me, John. The lady gave it to me," she cried, holding up a little cornelian heart that hung from her neck.

"What lady, Hattie."

"The lady that lives to Mr. Ainslie's, and wears a black dress."

John suddenly bent down closer over the trinket to hide the flush upon his cheek.

"And what did the lady say to you?" he asked, when he could command his voice.

"She asked me what my name was," replied the eager child, "and when I told her, she kissed me, and gave me that. But what makes her look so sorry, John? I love her—don't you?"

"There, Hattie, don't talk so fast. You don't give your brother a chance to eat his supper," said Mrs. Grant, whose keen eye detected her son's confusion.

The little girl, thus admonished, sank back in her chair, and looked at the heart with a sigh of ineffable satisfaction that made her mother smile. John, relieved from all further importunity, finished his supper in peace, and took his hat from the table behind him.

"What time shall you be at home, John?" asked his mother, as he went toward the door

For a moment their eyes met, and both smiled gravely. John had no secrets from this dear mother. She read his errand in his eyes.

"I cannot tell," he cried. "I may be at home in an hour, and I may not come in till very late. It will not depend upon myself, you know."

"Well, good luck go with you, my boy."

"Thank you, mother. Good-bye."

He shut the cottage-door, and hurried down the path that led to the road. The cottage of Mr. Ainslie was not far away, and his mother, watching him out of sight, saw, with a beating heart, that he turned towards the house, and went through the little rustic gate that led into the orchard. Here she lost him, and went about her household duties with the prattle of her little girl ringing in her ears.

If John Grant had besought favor of Venus, she could not have given him a better opportunity to declare his errand than he had before him now. It was the custom of the young widow to walk alone in the orchard each evening, just as the brilliant colors of the sunset in the west were melting into the clear gray of twilight. It was the hour she loved best of the twenty-four, and she always spent it alone. What visions passed through her brain, as she paced up and down that grass-trodden path, it is not for me to say. At all events, she was not thinking of John, and when he stood suddenly before her, she started as if a serpent had sprang up at her feet.

"You here!" she said coldly, when the first agitation was over. "What can we two have to say to each other, Mr. Grant? Pardon me—the air is chilly, and I must go in."

"No—give me but one moment," he said hurriedly. "Let me speak to you once more, and then, if you will, you may leave me forever."

"If you had done what I have done I would consent," she answered in the same cold voice. "If you had injured me, I would forgive you. But I cannot be forgiven—it hurts my pride—and that, you know, is the worst part of me."

"Stay one moment," he pleaded. "Tell me one thing."

"What is it."

"In all these months, that have been such months of misery to me, have you been happy, Sarah?"

She smiled bitterly.

"I see you wish to wring a confession from me, that you may soothe your wounded vanity with my grief. Mr Grant, I have been wretched."

He came nearer, with an eager air, and took her hand. But she drew it away angrily.

"Because I have said that, do you think I will allow you to carry on this farce? Let me pass, sir. And hereafter, never dare to speak to me again."

"Sarah—what do you mean."

"I mean"—she answered defiantly "that you shall never have an opportunity to laugh at my weakness with Rose Meadows. She told me, when I first came back here, that she was going to live in the old homestead in another year."

The look of wonder and doubt on John Grant's face, cleared away into a sunny smile.

"So she is, Sarah, but it is as my brother Richard's wife."

She looked keenly at him

"Is this true?"

"It is. Oh, Sarah, how could you think I would ever marry any woman but you. You are the only one I have ever loved—and if ——"

"Hush! If all this is true—if you have loved me all the time, why have you avoided me so."

He hesitated, and looked away.

"Answer me!" she said haughtily.

"Sarah," he stammered—"it was—it was your wealth that kept me away. I am no fortune-hunter. I had made up my mind to go away and forget you—and yet I could not leave you."

The young widow looked up at him with a happy smile.

"John—that wealth that has been such a fright to you, need trouble you no longer It is mine no more."

"Thank Heaven for that!" was the proud reply. "Now, I can speak out bravely. I loved you, Sarah, when we were younger, but not so well as I love you now. My home is humble—it is very different from that you have had—but I love you sincerely and will try to make you happy. Sarah, will you forgive me for everything, and be my wife?"

With a beating heart he awaited her answer Her face was turned away, but when he bent down, and caught a glimpse of it, it was full of sunshine.

"Will you, Sarah?" he repeated.

"Yes, John."

He caught her in his arms, and kissed her passionately. To know that she was all his own, when he had so nearly lost her, was almost too much joy. But she shook back the dark hair from her face and laughed heartily as she stole from his arms.

"John—I told you my wealth was mine no longer. But I have only made a mental transfer of it. It is all yours now."

"Sarah—have you not lost it?"

She made him a graceful little courtesy.

"No, sir—only that I have made it all over to you. Still, if it is likely to prove such a burden to you, I presume I can find ways enough to get rid of it."

I shall not copy his answer. It might not sound so well upon paper, as it did there. But Sarah leaned her head againt his breast, and looked around upon the beautiful scene with a smiling heart. It was the same on which she had gazed so discontentedly two years before.

"A contented mind is a continual feast," she murmured. "I could not understand it then—but now I think I feel the truth of those words, dear John."

OLD AGE PRONE TO FLATTERY

Openness to flattery is the common disgrace of declining life. When men feel weakness increasing on them, they naturally desire to rest from the struggles of contradiction, the fatigue of reasoning, the anxiety of circumspection; when they are hourly tormented with pains and diseases, they are unable to bear any new disturbance, and consider all opposition as an addition to misery, of which they feel already more than they can patiently endure. Thus desirous of peace, and thus fearful of pain, the old man seldom inquires after any other qualities in those whom he caresses, than quickness in conjecturing his desires, activity in supplying his wants, dexterity in intercepting complaints before they approach near enough to disturb him, flexibility to his present humor, submission to hasty petulance, and attention to wearisome narrations. By these arts alone many have been able to defeat the claims of kindred and of merit, and to enrich themselves with presents and legacies.

JUDGING THE ACTION BY THE ACTOR.

The same actions performed by different hands produce different effects, and instead of rating the man by his performances, we rate too frequently the performance by the man. It sometimes happens in the combinations of life, that important services are performed by inferiors, but though their zeal and activity may be paid by pecuniary rewards, they seldom excite that flow of gratitude, or obtain that accumulation of recompense, with which all think it their duty to acknowledge the favor of those who descend to their assistance from a higher elevation. To be obliged, is to be in some respect inferior to another; and few willingly indulge the memory of an action which raises one whom they have always been accustomed to think below them, but satisfy themselves with faint praise and penurious payment, and then drive it from their own minds, and endeavor to conceal it from the knowledge of others.

◆

Envy Inapplicable to Distant Greatness.—It is not common to envy those with whom we cannot easily be placed in comparison. Every man sees without malevolence the progress of another in the tracks of life which he has himself no desire to tread, and hears, without inclinations to cavils or contradiction, the renown of those whose distance will not suffer them to draw the attention of mankind from his own merit.

◆

Friendship Self-Love in Disguise.—The most generous and disinterested friendship must be resolved at last into the love of ourselves; he therefore whose reputation or dignity inclines us to consider his esteem as a testimonial of desert, will always find our hearts open to his endearments.

STUDY AND LABOR

The man whose genius qualifies him for great undertakings, must at least be content to learn from books the present state of human knowledge; that he may not ascribe to himself the invention of arts generally known; weary his attention with experiments of which the event has been long registered; and waste, in attempts which have already succeeded or miscarried, that time which might have been spent with usefulness and honor upon new undertakings.

But though the study of books is necessary, it is not sufficient to constitute literary eminence. He that wishes to be counted among the benefactors of posterity, must add by his own toil to the acquisitions of his ancestors, and secure his memory from neglect by some valuable improvement. This can only be effected by looking out upon the wastes of the intellectual world, and extending the power of learning over regions yet undisciplined and barbarous; or by surveying more exactly her ancient dominions; and driving ignorance from the fortresses and retreats where she skulks undetected and undisturbed.

DEATH-BED TEACHINGS.

The only conviction that rushes upon the soul, and takes away from our appetites and passions the power of resistance, is to be found at the bed of a dying friend. To enter this school of wisdom is not the peculiar privilege of geometricians; the most sublime and important precepts require no uncommon opportunities, nor laborious preparations; they are enforced without the aid of eloquence and understood without skill in analytic science. Every tongue can utter them. He that wishes in earnest to obtain just sentiments concerning his condition, and would be intimately acquainted with the world, may find instructions on every side. He that desires to enter behind the scene, which every art has been employed to decorate, and every passion labors to illuminate, and wishes to see life stripped of those ornaments which make it glitter on the stage, and exposed in its natural meanness, impotence, and nakedness, may find all the delusion laid open in the chamber of disease; he will there find vanity divested of her robes, power deprived of her sceptre, and hypocrisy without her mask.

THE SPIRIT OF PEACE.

They are rightly termed writes a lady, "the gentler sex." Their sensibilities are deeper and quicker than those of men; they know better how to sympathise in the joys and sorrows of others; they live on the sweet and hallowed reciprocities of affection; and all their influence comes not from terror and violence, or even authority, but from goodness, from kind offices, from the resistless power of love. Theirs is the empire of the heart. They wield no sword; they threaten no violence; they claim little authority; they seldom insist even on their acknowledged rights; and yet they exert their full share of influence in every department of society, and silently move unseen the hands that sway the world. They rule by obedience; they conquer by retreat; they triumph by submission; they carry nearly all their points by insisting strenuously on none. Such a temper is the spirit of peace; such a character an embodiment of principles; and the result is a decisive illustration of their power.

IMITATORS NEVER GREAT.

No man ever yet became great by imitation Whatever hopes for the veneration of mankind must have invention in the design or the execution; either the effect must itself be new, or the means by which it is produced. Either truths hitherto unknown must be discovered, or those which are already known enforced by stronger evidence, facilitated by clearer method, or elucidated by brighter illustrations.

Fame cannot spread wide or endure long that is not rooted in nature, and manured by art. That which hopes to resist the blast of malignity, and stand firm against the attacks of time, must contain in itself some original principle of growth. The reputation which arises from the detail or transposition of borrowed sentiments, may spread for a while, like ivy, on the rind of antiquity, but will be torn away by accident or contempt, and suffered to rot unheeded on the ground.

A CRUEL WRONG.

None of the cruelties exercised by wealth and power upon indigence and dependence is more mischievous in its consequences, or more frequently practised with wanton negligence, than the encouragement of expectations which are never to be gratified, and the elation and depression of the heart by needless vicissitudes of hope and disappointment.

Every man is rich or poor, according to the proportion between his desires and enjoyments; any enlargement of wishes is therefore equally destructive to happiness with the diminution of possession; and he that teaches another to long for that which he shall never obtain, is no less an enemy to his quiet, than if he had robbed him of part of his patrimony.

TOPICS FOR GENERAL CONVERSATION.

Whatever can interest only in a particular place is frivolous; whatever can interest only those who have pursued a particular course of study is pedantic. Those topics of conversation only which are capable of interesting all tolerably informed men are dignified and elegant. They are those on which men of all places and professions may converse with each other. Human nature and character in general; events which affect the public, and, consequently, politics; polite literature, which delights every moderately refined man; as much of sciences, arts, and professions, as when expressed in popular language the world in general can understand;—these are the subjects of interesting conversation.

◆

Unnoticed Actions often the Most Deserving—Of actions that deserve our attention, the most splendid are not always the greatest. Fame, and wonder, and applause, are not excited but by external and adventitious circumstances, often distinct and separate from virtue and heroism. Eminence of station, greatness of effect, and all the favors of fortune, must concur to place excellence in public view; but fortitude, diligence, and patience, divested of their show, glide unobserved through the crowd of life, and suffer and act, though with the same vigor and constancy, yet without pity and without praise.

◆

The Prerogative of Innocence.—To dread no eye, and to suspect no tongue, is the great prerogative of innocence; an exemption granted only to invariable virtue. But guilt has always its horrors and solicitudes; and to make it yet more shameful and detestable, it is doomed often to stand in awe of those to whom nothing could give influence or weight, but their power of betraying.

GOD BLESS THEM.

BY C. G. DUNN.

The winter wind blows o'er the moor
  And sweeps along the lea;
There's misery at the poor man's door,
  There's wretchedness at sea.
God bless the sailor on this night
  And guide him through the storm!
For sad's the heart without the light
  Of hope, to keep it warm.

There are chilled forms to-night, and weak,
  That lounge not 'round a fire,
Where cheering flames of comfort speak
  Of gratified desire.
God bless such stricken ones to-night
  And guard them with thine arm!
And in their hearts renew the light
  Of hope, to keep them warm.

God bless the sailor on the sea!
  God bless the toiling man!
God bless the house where poverty
  Sits gloomy-faced and wan!
God bless all of my fellow-men
  And shield them from the storm;
For sad's the heart without the light
  Of hope, to keep it warm.

FOREST SKETCHES---NO. 22.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY COL. WALTER P. DUNLAP.

A DUCKING ADVENTURE.

One morning I saw what I supposed to be a flock of ducks fly over the plantation, and I asked Uncle Abner if they had such fowls about in that section. He said yes, plenty of them; only not such ducks as we had upon the Atlantic board. They were small, and apt to have a sort of musky taste; but by proper cooking they could be made not only palatable, but really fine eating. He assured us that Mammy understood how to fix them fit for a king.

My next question was, whether he thought we could find some if we went after them; and to this his answer was equally satisfactory. He could take us to a place where we should be sure to find some.

After this we were not long in agreeing upon the sport for the day. We prepared our guns, took drink and provisions for dinner, and then set out. Our host took one of his "boys" along to help Fitzeben to paddle the boat. This "boy" was a big lump of a darkey, named Quimbo, about forty years of age, and blacker, if possible, than our own Fitz. He was a comical genius, full of fun, and withal a faithful fellow.

We had just reached the edge of the bayou, where the boat was secured, when Fitzeben declared that he saw a duck.

"Ho!—Mas'r Ben.—gub us yer gun!" he cried, dancing about in his impatience like a wild man. "Gub us yer gun, an' I'll go an' fotch 'um!"

"You haint seen no duck," said Ben.

"By golly gosh, Mas'r Ben, uf I didn't see a duck ye may make a duck-pie ob me—ye may, suah!"

Ben gave up his gun, and Fitz darted off through an opening in the underbrush, where he had seen the duck go. We heard the crashing of the bushes as the old fellow rushed along, and presently we heard the report of his gun. In a few moments more he returned, with the sweat rolling down his face—the gun in one hand, and in the other a bird.

"Dar! Look a' dat, yer ole fat misbeliever!" he cried, shaking his game in Ben's face. "What yer call that, yer great mount'n ob flesh? Tell dis ole darkey him can't find a duck! Go 'long wid ye. What yer call dat?"

Ben gazed upon the bird which Fitz shook so exultingly in his face, but he could not speak. He could only clap both hands upon his diaphragm and roar outright.

By this time we had all seen old Fitz's duck, and such another succession of uproarious bursts I never heard. The intense pride and pomp of our darkey in his supposed luck, added to the triumphant manner in which he swung the prize aloft, afforded about the most ludicrous picture I ever beheld.

"'Taint a duck!" finally burst from Ben's lips, as he straightened up for a moment, and then bent over again to ease the shaking of his fat sides.

"By golly gosh! You say dat aint a duck? You don't know noff'n!" exclaimed Fitz, indignantly. "Mass'r Smit', what you call dis ere bird, eh?"

"What is it?" gasped Uncle Abner, straining with all his power to overcome the laughter that was upon him, sufficiently to allow of his speaking. "Why—that's a—that's—one of my—one of—— Ha, ha, ha, oho-o-o-o-oh! Yah-ha-a-a-ah! It's one of—my old—*old black hens!*"

And so it was. The poor thing had wandered away from the house, and Fitzeben had found it. The darkey had heard us say that the ducks about there were entirely different from the ducks upon the eastern shores, and he had supposed that this was one of them, sure enough.

"Well—now jes' look heah—yer needn't laff so at it. By golly gosh, ole Ben Gilroy, uff I don't laff at you afore long, den you say ole Fitzeben nebber cotch a duck!"

But the laughter was not to be restrained so easily.

"Say, Fitz," cried Ben. "If ye keep that duck long enough she'll lay ye some eggs. I'd try it."

At this the darkey let the bird fly full at Ben's head, but he was too nervous to aim straight, and the prize passed clear of its intended mark and went into the water.

This circumstance put us in good humor, and long after we had entered the boat and pushed from the shore, burst after burst of laughter rang out over the murky waters of the bayou.

"We'll have to pull out of this place before we find any game," said our host. "About two miles off there is an arm of the bayou which has upon one side a low flat shore covered with tall reeds, and there are some tender roots there which the ducks hunt for food."

So the two darkeys pulled away, and in the course of half to three-quarters of an hour we entered the bayou where we were to find the ducks. We entered upon the northern side, while the shore where we hoped to find our game, if we found them feeding, was to the southward; so we pulled noiselessly across, intending to creep down upon the opposite shore as carefully as possible. We had reached the edge of the reeds, and were moving slowly along, when Quimbo saw a motion of the tall grass, about four rods ahead, which seemed to be made by something working at the roots. We got our guns in readiness—all cocked and at the shoulder—and then moved cautiously along.

"We'll have to take 'em on the wing," said Uncle Abner, "so be ready."

We had come very nearly opposite to the spot where the motion of the reeds had been observed, when our host whispered for us to "stand by," and then he gave an alarm.

In an instant a dozen ducks sprang into the air, while we could see that more were running off through the reeds. We all fired together, and more than half of the birds dropped. The boat was pushed into the brake, and after some fifteen minutes spent in pushing and tugging over the mud, we succeeded in securing five of the ducks. They were fat and plump, and gave promise of a savory pie.

Having gained the clear water once more, and loaded up again, we pulled on, as carefully as before, up the bayou. We were liable to start up more game at any moment, so we were prepared. Half way up the shore we got another shot, and this time succeeded in securing seven beauties. The rest of the distance upon that side was pulled without seeing any more game, and our host gave the two darkeys orders to paddle on to the next opening.

The passage from this bayou to the next one was between large trees which seemed to have their very roots in the water, which was in most places so deep that we could not see bottom. We finally reached another broad opening in the bayou, and within five minutes afterwards we started up a flock of over fifty ducks. We were not quite prepared for them, but yet nine of them were brought down and picked up, they having fallen in open water.

We had started to pull across this bayou when our attention was attracted by a strong commotion in the water not far distant.

"Thuy'r alligators fightin'," said Garl, who had watched the movement some moments. "Some hungry varmint on 'em's fell afoul of a smaller one."

"Guess there's more'n one afoul on em," suggested Uncle Abner.

And so it would seem; for the commotion in the water was now wild and terrific. Two huge, black, serrated tails lashed the surface into foam, and occasionally a third would make its appearance with struggling movements. We stopped our boat, and sat watching the fierce battle.

Suddenly the monsters disappeared, and came up a few moments afterwards at some distance from the place we had first seen them, and a little nearer to our boat than before. We could now see very plainly that two huge alligators had attacked a third nearly as large as themselves.

"Do the miserable things eat each other?" asked Hobson, who was not thoroughly posted up in the natural history of southern reptiles.

"Sartin they does," answered Garl. "They'll eat anything; and their own young 'uns more'n anything else."

"Eat their own young?"

"Yes," responded the old trapper. "And thar never wor a wiser law o' natur. Ef they didn't eat 'em the country would be overrun with 'em in a leetle while. Why sometimes the alligator lays three or four hundred eggs at a brood. They generally hatch, every one on 'em; an' ef the old 'uns didn't begin to eat 'em about as soon as they gain the water we'd have more on 'em about than we'd know what to do with."

"It's a curious fact," remarked Uncle Abner, "that the female alligator will use such curious means to protect her eggs and hatching young. No animal could be more wary than she is in depositing her eggs, or use more ingenuity in concealing them. And then at the proper time she comes to their assistance. At the end of about thirty days she knows that they are beginning to hatch, and she goes up to the place where she laid her eggs in the sand, and digs them out with her paws. Some of the young ones run straight off for the water, and others climb up on their mother's back, and are taken to the water so. But the moment the water is reached all ties of family are at an end, and the male and female both commence at once to eat their offspring when ever they can get hold of them. The young ones seem to have a sort of instinctive knowledge of their danger, for they dive for the mud at once, where they crawl in and hide; but not many of them escape. They have to come forth for food, and are very apt to become food themselves."

Some further remarks were made upon the habits of the abominable things, when our attention was wholly taken up by the fierceness of the battle which was raging. The attacked alligator seemed to have proved too strong for his assailants to conquer at once. They had been snapping their great jaws at each other, but now commenced a battle with their huge tails. The monsters leaped and thrashed until the water for some distance about them was one dense mass of foam. Suddenly, while the conflict was raging the most fiercely, the attacked alligator sank from sight, and on the next instant the other two followed him.

We sat still in our boat watching for the monster reptiles to come up again. I had just opened my lips to speak when an exclamation from Quimbo startled us all. We had time to see a break upon the surface of the water close under our gunwale, and on the next moment a huge alligator sprang up and leaped half over the boat, resting his fore feet upon the opposite rail. He struggled an instant, and the boat went over just as the other two monsters broke water and appeared upon the scene!

That was a moment of strange, wild terror. There were we—eight of us—floundering in the water; our boat bottom upwards; and three great alligators right among us engaged in savage conflict! My first movement, as soon as I could command my senses, was to try if my feet would touch bottom. But they would not. My next movement was to swim for the boat, which I reached in safety.

The cries of my companions were loud and fearful. Quimbo and Garl were the most collected of the lot, and I have no doubt that some of us might have been killed had it not been for their efforts. Quimbo had on no clothing but a cotton shirt and a pair of old trousers of the same material, so he could swim very well. He managed to get one of the paddles, and with this he poked the dead ducks, which were floating all about us, out towards the alligators.

Old Garl had by some peculiar movement of his own secured his rifle, and kept it dry, and having gained the boat he held on with one hand, holding his weapon clear of the water with the other, and thus he watched the movements of the alligators.

The monster reptiles ceased fighting as soon as they became aware of our presence, and having backed off to a respectable distance, being probably somewhat frightened by the yells of our party, they lay and watched us for some moments. Finally one of them made a dive for Fitzeben, and just as the darkey gave a terrific yell the ball from the trapper's rifle put out the varmint's eye.

At the sound of the rifle all three of the alligators disappeared, and we at once turned our attention to our boat, which, after repeated efforts we managed to get upright. But she was full of water. However—we had our hats and caps, and while Quimbo watched for the alligators we commenced to bail out the boat.

But the reader may be assured that the position was by no means a pleasant one. For some time we were obliged to bail without resting any of our weight upon the edge of the boat, for the moment we did so under she went. Finally, however, we got enough out so that we could help support ourselves by the gunwales, and then the work was easier.

But the manual labor was nothing. The idea of those horrible monsters—that at any moment we might be seized by the legs and drawn under forever—was most fearful! I could read the terror upon the faces of my companions, and I knew they could read the same on mine. Every motion of the clinging fabric about my legs sent a thrill of horror to my heart, and I expected every moment to feel the fatal grip, or to see some of my companions disappear.

We had got the boat aoout half bailed out, when a shout of alarm from Quimbo startled us from our work. We turned and saw two alligators coming towards us, while a third lay upon the surface of the water, dead! The faithful slave had managed to keep the ducks together, having collected them after we began to work on the boat, and he now poked half a dozen of them towards the alligators. The reptiles quickly seized them, and then as quickly made off. We saw the result of Quimbo's wit, and once more went at work upon the boat.

I must acknowledge that I was growing weak; and I could see the others were failing also. There was something in that continuous, overpowering dread of being seized from beneath the water by the deadly monsters that kept the heart strained, and made the head ache. As we worked we could fancy every ripple the premonition of a dreadful death, and the occasional groans and gasps that burst from various lips told how powerful was the fear

By and by another cry of alarm from Quimbo turned our attention to the alligators. They had come up again—two of them—and were approaching us. The negro asked us if the boat was most bailed out. We told him yes; and upon this he gave the rest of the ducks a push towards the rapacious monsters. They seized them with a half frightened, shy movement—grasping one after the other, until they had got them all—and then disappeared, as though afraid that we should try to rob them of their prize.

In three minutes more our boat was bailed out sufficiently for us to climb into it, which we did as quickly as possible. When we were all in we sat a few moments to gain breath and gaze down into the murky water where our guns were. It was very evident that we could do nothing towards recovering our weapons then, so we took a careful survey of the place, marking the bearings of various objects upon the shore; and when this was done we started for home.

And a sorry company we were. Our clothes wet and dirty—for the alligators had stirred up the soft mud at the bottom,—our game gone,—our guns and pouches at the bottom of the bayou—all save Garl's,—and our hearts all aching from the terrible suspense of agony under which we had been so long laboring.

By and by old Fitzeoen looked up from his work, and while a broad grin overspread his ebony phiz, he quietly said,—

"Ole Fitz shot a hen. *Don't ye want to laff at him?*"

That was all he said, but 'twas enough to set us in a roar, and from that moment we felt better.

When we reached home we came very near throwing good Mammy into spasms by our story; but she soon assured herself that we were all safe, and then, good soul, she made herself busy for our comfort; and by the time supper was ready our adventure was only held as one of the interesting stories of the past.

On the following morning we made a drag of a big iron-toothed rake, and went out to the place where we had lost our guns, and succeeded in getting them every one. We regained all we had lost save Ned's shot-pouch. And on that occasion Fitzeben relieved himself of another of his jokes, any quantity of which he had got off at our expense. Said he,—

"By golly gosh—de fust duck we got I shot—an' 'twas a hen. But de last duck we got was a wusser duck 'an any ob 'em. We all ob us got *dat duck* togedder!"

A "*Ducking* Adventure," surely.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Miss H. wishes to know if she would be running a risk to place as implicit confidence in a lady friend *after* her (the friend's) marriage as *before*? Such a question should be decided by a jury of women. For our part, we do not see why marriage should deteriorate a woman's moral character so as to render her less worthy of confidence than when she was a maiden. It may be that our correspondent is afraid a married woman will be "certain to tell her husband everything," and that for *that* reason it would not be discreet to confide so many secrets to her keeping as she might have safely been entrusted with during her girlhood. Such a view of the case is neither unnatural nor uncomplimentary.

A Poor Mother says she has two bashful sons, whom she would like to have "well married," but who are "so backward and ashamed she don't know how to get them married," and she wishes us to come to her assistance. We should be glad to aid the "poor mother," but really we know not how to do so. Nothing will help her but time and experience. Bashfulness can not be *cured*; it must be *out-grown*.

S.—It is not customary now-a-days for people to bow and salute each other while sitting in church, even though the services have not commenced; yet a smile or very slight nod of recognition is permissible. When the congregation are departing after the services, it is then proper to salute an acquaintance in any decorous manner.

L. U. H. B.—Should you "send us a manuscript of two hundred (or any other number of) pages" it would not be read, nor should we "take the trouble to return it," nor to "keep it until called for." Don't send it. Let no one send us manuscript.

A Friend of the Ledger has a friend who had for some time been courting a certain young lady with much encouragement. Just as he was about to offer her his heart and hand in exchange for her own, our correspondent was astounded by the intelligence that she had been privately married to another but a few days previous. He at once informed his friend of this afflicting fact, as gently as he could. The information quite prostrated the unhappy lover, who rushed into the wildest dissipation to drown his mortification and grief, and who is now constantly in a state of beastly intoxication. The friends of the unfortunate man now severely censure our correspondent for imparting to him the news of his false sweetheart's unfaithfulness, and he appeals to us to know whether he is justly censurable or not. Of course *not*. His friend would have been at least equally shocked had he declared his love to the heartless and conscienceless woman, and *then* been told that she had married another. In fact, in such an event he would have been, if possible, more thoroughly humiliated and crushed than on the occasion of our correspondent's making the disclosure to him. The false-hearted woman is the only person to blame.

An Anxious Father.—You can never govern your children by fretting and scolding at them, nor by administering severe chastisements. The first thing for you to do is—*to learn to govern yourself*. Until you shall have done that, you can never properly govern anybody else. Good temper, firmness, a strong sense of justice, and common-sense, are the most valuable requisites in a father, and he who possesses them not will always have an unruly family no matter how much he scolds and frets at his children, whips them, and boxes their ears, and shuts them up in dark closets, or resorts to other ingenious devices for torturing them and spoiling their dispositions.

W. P. C., Madison, Wis.—Counting this number (May 16th,) we have this year issued thirty-one numbers of the Ledger, all of which can be furnished you for $1,24; and in them you will get *complete*, the stories of "The Refugees," "Karmel the Scout," the "Abducted Heiress," and "The Wild Knight; or, the Unknown Crusader," besides all the other stories, sketches, and admirable reading matter of said thirty-one numbers.

Henrietta.—When for any cause a marriage engagement has been broken off, it is not obligatory upon the parties to return the presents which have passed between them, although in cases where ill-feeling arises it would be better to do so. No persons of proper delicacy of feeling would wish to keep mementoes of those with whom they are at variance.

A Widower.—When you find a woman whom you would like to marry, and who would marry you, and to whom your children would not object as a mother-in-law, you would perhaps do well to wed with her. A man who cannot decide for himself in such a purely personal matter, is hardly fitted for the responsibilities of a husband or a parent.

C. E., Jamaica.—Your attempt to overthrow the Sabbath and the universe generally, is too weak and ridiculous to require any refutation. A man who would write such nonsense should be taken in hand by his mamma and spanked into the enjoyment of at least sufficient sense to enable him to see what an ass he is.

E. W. F., Boston.—The publisher you refer to is the man of "Cold Victuals" fame. We do not blame you for putting in a good word for your neighbor, but we cannot help the rapid decline of his paper. He seems to have made up his mind to ruin it. He should quit dealing in "Cold Victuals" and give his subscribers at least one "warm meal."

Farmer S. S.—It makes but little difference in what State an intelligent, industrious, and frugal farmer settles down; such an one will thrive anywhere, whereas a farmer of an opposite description will thrive nowhere.

Jonathan.—Some travelling book agents make good wages, and some spend what little capital they commence with, get discouraged, and give up the business in disgust. It is far from being a pleasant or safe business.

R. S.—If a young lady considers her letters of sufficient consequence to seek to reclaim them, her male correspondents should return them; otherwise they can do as they please about it.

W. P. A.—If you have set your heart upon quitting city life and becoming a farmer you had better at least give "rural felicity" a trial, as that is the only way you can settle the question permanently.

G. H. L.—If the young lady can give a satisfactory explanation of her conduct you should of course forgive her. And she will doubtless satisfy you. No adolescent youth can withstand the fascinations of dimples and dimity.

A Young Lady wishes to know if a girl should quarrel with her lover and return his letters and gifts, and he should refuse to accept them, what she should *then* do? Burn them up.

R. M. D.—Hamilcar, Hannibal, and all the rest of the Carthagenians, from Queen Dido to the last of the race, were white people.

A Father.—If your sons have not been accustomed to bodily labor they will not take kindly to farming, and "life in the West" will be distasteful to them.

Mother and Andrew.—The husband *should* occupy the head of the table, and take upon himself the principle burdens thereunto appertaining.

Emma.—A girl whose lover keeps putting off the wedding day from month to month and year to year, had better break off the engagement.

James S.—You will find all the information that we can give concerning the Military Academy at West Point, in the Ledger of March 14th, of the present year.

Concert.—Musical entertainments are harmless, and there can be no moral objection to the "concert business" if it is carried on honestly.

Buchanan.—You could not do better than to improve your present opportunity to get a good education. It will "pay" well.

Grace.—Do nothing. Let time bring the matter round. It is immodest and unlady-like even to think of such a course of action as you propose.

Sally Ann, Maryland.—*All* of Scott's novels come under the denomination of "Waverly Novels." The first of the series was called Waverly—hence the name.

Mademoiselle.—You can get any number of Ledgers bound, but it would be better to have not less than fifty-two bound at a time, and in one volume.

A. C. L.—We regret that we cannot oblige you by publishing your contributions. They are not up to the mark.

W. L. M.—You had better stop your "lottery-gambling" at once.

Camden.—This correspondent says there is a dispute going on in his circle of friends concerning a certain important matter, and as they cannot settle the question, or come any where near settling it, they have agreed to leave it to the Ledger. The question is this, namely: Suppose a man and woman who love each other truly and devotedly, between themselves agree to be man and wife and live together as such, are they not as truly married in the sight of Heaven as though a priest or magistrate had united them in wedlock according to the legal formula? We will answer this question by asking another. Suppose a couple of men wish to trade for a piece of land, and between themselves agree that they *have traded* and that the land is conveyed and deeded from one to the other, and the purchaser moves on to the land without any deed or conveyance being executed and recorded according to law, is not the land deeded to him in the sight of Heaven just as much as though the deed had been signed, sealed and delivered, and recorded in the office of the Clerk of the county in which the land is situate? Do you not see how stupid such questions are? Marriage is a *legal act prescribed by the State*, just as much as is the deeding of a parcel of land; and if the act is not performed, *it is not performed*: that is all there is about it. That a couple can *marry themselves*, by taking the proper *public* measures, is a settled fact; but unless they *are married*, either by themselves or some one else, they of course are *not* married, either in the sight of Heaven or of the world. No *private* agreement and *private* living together constitute a marriage.

Niobe.—Why did you permit the marriage engagement to run along five years without fulfilment? Such conduct on the part of your lover is monstrous, and on your part it is ridiculous. When your friends tell you "he is not one of the marrying sort," they probably speak the truth. Some men engage themselves to girls on purpose to keep the girls from marrying. They are spiritual vampires, who suck the blood and bloom out of their victims' cheeks, and the hope and happiness out of their hearts, and then leave them. This comes of long engagements. Engagements should be null and void after two years. If the parties choose, let them *renew* it at the expiration of that time.

A Baltimore Girl, on behalf of a young friend, asks what that young friend should do, she being engaged to a man whom she once thought she loved but whom she is now conscious of not loving and whom she is certain she never can love. She ought at once to state the truth frankly and kindly to the gentleman, when he will probably release her from the engagement; but if he will not do so, she should notify him that she considers the engagement at an end. A girl should never marry a man whom she believes she never can love.

Novice.—We cannot give you any rules of action which will practically aid you in discharging the duties of groomsman for your friend. What would be proper at one wedding would be out of taste at another. You should ask some one who is intimate with the parties, or who at least belongs to the same rank in society with them, and who is versed in such matters, to tell you what would be in good taste on that particular occasion. Your dress, &c., should be a matter of consultation and arrangement with others who are to officiate, so the general effect may be harmonious.

A Reader asks for "a name for the girl-baby." Abigail, Annabel, Adaline, Alice; Belle; Caroline, Catherine, Cecile; Edith, Emma, Eveline, Evangeline; Fanny, Flora, Florabel; Isadore, Isabel, Imogene; Mary, Matilda; Olivia, Ophelia; Susan, Sarah. These are all pretty, and if you will utter them respectively aloud with your little daughter's family name, sounding each combination in a clear and distinct voice, you will be able to select the combination which strikes your ear as the smoothest, the most euphonious and the easiest of utterance; and *that* will be the "best" name.

B. D. C. J.—Parents have a legal right to open letters addressed to their minor children. Parties can lawfully marry at any age over fourteen, if they can elude the vigilance of their opposing parents and guardians; but it would be a rash act for youths thus to marry. We could not give an opinion on the whipping of his daughter by a father without knowing *all* the particulars. On general principles, however, we should say that a man who would beat a daughter over twelve years of age is capable of becoming a great brute.

Mrs. J. W. is anxious to correct her daughter's habit of constantly looking in the glass. A very common habit, we suspect; for people are very apt to fall in love with themselves. Indeed it is one of the most prevalent species of love. It would be like attempting to cure original sin, or any other universal weakness, to attempt the correction of a habit like this. It will come in due time, as ma' well knows. Perhaps too soon; for the cure often comes with sadness of heart.

Christopher.—It is not probable that you can find the terms you mention in an English dictionary, as it is but of comparatively late years that they have come into use in our literature. "Punjaub" means five rivers; "Baboo" is a Hindoo title about equivalent to our Esquire; a "Begum" is a princess; a "Coolie" is a porter; a "Cutwal" is a magistrate; and a "Bungalow" is a cottage made of bamboo and mats, with a projecting thatched roof.

J. J.—Your case is an unfortunate one, and we hardly know what to say about it. Although your wife has been coaxed away from you, and kept away a year by her mother, she may still love you, and be capable of making you a happy home could outside evil influences be warded off. You would do well to hunt up your wife and have an interview with her, and then you can better judge what course to pursue thereafter.

Fanny has red hair, and cannot make it out, as her father and mother are both dark. We cannot make it out either. It may and will grow browner. Some ladies can make their hair grow gradually very dark by a very simple process. They take an atrapilatory, or black dye, and use it very weak for a month or two, deepening it imperceptibly, so that at the end of two years they have beautiful raven locks.

Kent.—We did not say that "a person can teach himself Latin, and that the necessary books would cost but a few dollars." What we said was this, namely: A person can acquire by himself a knowledge of the *elements of Latin*, and that the books necessary in doing *this* would cost but a few dollars. A thorough knowledge of the Latin language can only be acquired by an extended course of severe study.

Charles Garvey wishes us to give him the name, residence and terms of a good teacher of penmanship; in other words, he wishes us to insert a gratuitous advertisement for some writing master. We shall not do it, Charles. We do not insert advertisements in the Ledger for pay, and we certainly shall not do so for nothing.

An Anxious Daughter.—If you have reasons for believing that your father is alive, put an advertisement in the papers asking for information concerning him. You say you have been told that he went from New York to Cincinnati, and therefore you'd better advertise for him in the Cincinnati papers.

K.—We cannot answer your question definitely as you do not say in what State you are residing. On general principles, we should say that, if your statement can be legally substantiated, you can recover your household furniture, that your wife has no claim on you, and that you could get a divorce from her.

C. D., Louisville.—For your expressions of good will, which we feel certain are sincere, you have our hearty thanks; for your angry and abusive assault upon an esteemed contributor, you have our indignation; and for your threats of damaging consequences unless your virulent advice be heeded, you have our contempt.

Introduction.—It is impossible to lay down particular rules of conduct to be observed on the ceremony of introduction. A person who does not know enough to originate a remark upon such an occasion had better remain silent. Governors sometimes hold public levees, which any seemingly respectable person is at liberty to attend.

F. E. M.—You should balance the advantages and disadvantages of marrying, weigh well your duties to your little brothers and sisters, and then do what your maturest judgment tells you will be for the best. No stranger can decide such a question for you.

A. L. S., Boston.—It is true that a person who sends us the names of ten subscribers and $15 at the same time will receive an extra copy of the Ledger for his trouble; but we do not take subscriptions from Boston or other places where there are news-dealers.

G. L. P.—It is not impossible for a young man who is a stranger in this city to get a situation here, although the task would be apt to be rather a difficult one. It makes but little difference in what city you learn the business you wish to pursue.

Rosalba.—If a lady does not wish a man to repeat a visit, she is under no obligations to ask him to call again. If she wishes to keep on friendly terms with him, she should of course treat him in a friendly manner and ask him to repeat his call.

Alpha.—Literary wares are disposed of in the same way that other productions are: he who has them for sale offers them to some dealer in the article and gets what he can for them. If no one will buy, of course he cannot sell them. *We* do not want any at any price.

Cincinnati.—None of the advertised nostrums will cure a foul breath. Nothing will do that but careful diet and cleanly habits; or, if the difficulty is the result of disease, the subject must be restored to health before his breath can be purified and rendered inoffensive.

J. P. W.—"Boz" is the *nom de plume* under which Dickens first wrote.

J. G. J.—We have no surgeon attached to our office, and cannot undertake to cure such a difficulty as you mention.

Red Jacket.—There are fifty-two numbers in a volume of the Ledger.

Mary B.—We are much obliged for your good opinion, but we must decline to publish your story.

Inquisitive.—We never tell who our correspondents are.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*